Technique and Expression in Pianoforte Playing

351.

William Herbert George.

April 14. 1915.

TECHNIQUE

AND EXPRESSION

IN

PIANOFORTE PLAYING

BY

FRANKLIN TAYLOR.

1919

THE well-known teacher of the piano, Mr. Franklin Taylor, died on March 19th from heart failure following influenza. He studied his art at Leipzig, where Arthur Sullivan was among his fellow students. When in later years Sullivan was appointed principal of the newly formed National Training School of Music, Taylor was appointed professor of the piano. The National Training School eventually merged into the Royal College of Music and Taylor joined the first board of professors. He was a most successful teacher and his pupils are to be numbered among the most prominent of English pianists.

LONDON: NOVELLO AND COMPANY, LIMITED.
NEW YORK: THE H. W. GRAY CO., SOLE AGENTS FOR THE U.S.A.

LONDON:
NOVELLO AND COMPANY, LIMITED,
PRINTERS.

PREFACE.

In the course of my experience as a teacher of the pianoforte, an experience extending over many years, certain ideas have from time to time suggested themselves to me which have proved useful—to myself, as enabling me to express more clearly that which I desired my pupils to understand, and to my pupils, as tending to facilitate their comprehension of the various difficulties they have had to encounter, at the same time leading them to perceive the most practical means of overcoming them, and thus accelerating their general rate of progress.

These suggestions relate to both the mechanical and intellectual sides of the study of pianoforte-playing, or, briefly, to Technique and Expression, the chief matters implied by the first of these terms being the production of various qualities of tone, the choice of suitable fingering, and the best methods of attacking certain difficulties; while the second, which may perhaps be more aptly designated the *means* of expression, includes rhythm, phrasing, variety and gradation of tone, the use of the pedals, *et cætera.*

This book is the result of an endeavour to set down my ideas in a systematic form, and I put it forth in the hope that it may prove of service to some of my fellow-teachers, as likewise to any earnest student of the pianoforte who may be led by his interest in the subject to read what I have written.

FRANKLIN TAYLOR.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

https://archive.org/details/bwb_KP-899-949

I.

INTRODUCTORY.

The popularity of the pianoforte as a means of cultivating the study of music is undeniable, nor can it be said that this popularity is undeserved, and for three reasons: it is complete in itself as a solo instrument; it is, up to a certain point, easily learnt, at least in comparison with stringed instruments; and it possesses an enormous repertory of music. But with all these advantages it must be admitted that it is, from its very construction, more or less a mechanical instrument, perhaps, with the exception of the organ, the most purely mechanical of all. The fundamental idea is simplicity itself. There are stretched strings, each capable of being set in vibration by a blow from a hammer, which is attached to a key-lever. Accordingly, when the proper key is depressed, the corresponding sound results, and, given a sufficient velocity and accuracy of movement, to be acquired by practice, the most elaborate music can be produced with unerring precision. From this point of view the pianoforte is a perfect machine, but, if nothing more could be said in its favour, one might almost be pardoned if one were to question its claims to be considered a musical instrument at all.

Happily, owing to various causes, the quality, as well as the strength, of the sound given forth by vibrating strings varies greatly, according to the kind of blow struck—whether rapid or comparatively slow, whether forcible or gentle—and the pianist whose fingers are in all respects under control, and who possesses the necessary qualities of heart and brain to direct their movements, has at command all, or nearly all, the means requisite for the perfect production of music, and his playing at once enables the pianoforte to take rank with musical instruments of the highest class, as one which the greatest composers have ever delighted to use as an exponent of their thoughts.

Everything, then, depends upon the player, and we have now two questions to consider: firstly, what is the nature of the manifold powers which the good pianist must possess; and, secondly, how may the earnest student attain to the possession of these powers. Obviously, the proper position of the musical executant is that of intermediary between the composer and the listener—it is his task to present the thoughts of the composer in such a form that the listener may understand, enjoy, and be impressed by them. His relation to both must resemble that of a reciter who recites a poem or other literary composition, and we find similar requirements in both cases. For instance, the reciter must be faithful to the text of his author—it would be absurd for him to take the author's general ideas and clothe them in his own words—and the pianist must

be equally faithful, for why should a composer of music be less respectfully treated than the author of a literary composition? Again, the reciter must deliver his lines with due emphasis and variety, that they may be intelligible to the listener, and the same is demanded of the pianist. And lastly, the musical executant, equally with the reciter, must have become so thoroughly possessed of the inner sense and meaning of the composition to be delivered that it has become in a measure his own, and that he is able to give it out as part of his own thought and feeling, for then, and only then, will the listener be impressed and convinced.

The demands made by the music upon the executant are thus seen to be of three kinds—mechanical, intellectual, and emotional. The pianist may succeed or fail in respect of any one of these requirements. Examples of those who are strong in the first and perhaps the third of them, but fail in the second, are not infrequent, and may be met with among the public players of to-day; those whose strength lies in the first and second, rather than the third, are less numerous, but the result in these cases is, on the whole, more satisfactory; while those whose chief failure is in respect of mechanism are probably the most numerous of all, their efforts, however, being for the most part happily confined to private circles. But it is only when all three of the requirements above-named are satisfactorily fulfilled, and held under due government and properly balanced, that we find the perfect pianist.

As a means towards preparing himself to approach perfection as nearly as may be, it will be of great advantage to the student to endeavour to obtain as clear a view as possible of the difficulties which he will have to encounter, that nothing of importance may be neglected, and at the same time that he may not be confused or disheartened by the number of obstacles in his path. This will be best accomplished by trying to discover in how many ways music in the abstract, irrespective of any particular method of production, may be rendered rightly or wrongly. At first sight it might appear that possible faults are too numerous to be readily classified, but this is in reality not so, as we shall see on a closer examination. In the first place, the notes of a composition may be rightly or wrongly rendered as regards *pitch*, therefore when A is written it will not serve to play or sing B instead; secondly, the notes may be of right or wrong *values*, hence a minim must not be substituted for a crotchet, or anything else done of a like nature, to the injury of the rhythm; thirdly, the notes may be rightly or wrongly *connected or disconnected;* fourthly, the notes may be given with relatively right or wrong *degrees of force;* and fifthly, the rate of *speed* of the whole composition may be suitable or unsuitable. The list is sufficiently exhaustive—indeed, it is practically impossible to extend it, as far as pianoforte-playing is concerned—and a thorough and systematic method of study will undoubtedly depend on this fact being recognised.

The proper performance of a composition, then, is one in which the notes are rendered correctly in respect of pitch, duration, connection or disconnection, force, and speed. Of these the first three are matters of accuracy, and can be taught and learned; they represent the mechanical and intellectual sides of

performance, and they must claim the attention of both teacher and pupil in the first instance. The two remaining attributes, force and speed, are less definite in their application, being susceptible of an almost infinite variation of degree, and it is through his appreciation of their effect and influence upon the music that the player's individuality asserts itself, and that the emotional qualities of his playing become developed. Hence the progress of the pupil in the earlier stages of training must be expected to be, and indeed ought to be, almost exclusively in the direction of acquiring improved mechanism, together with habits of accuracy, and while it is necessary that his taste and judgment should at the same time be formed and strengthened by directions and suggestions from the riper experience of the teacher, yet it is only at a later period that any manifestation of the higher qualities of performance can be looked for; indeed, the greatest progress in this respect usually takes place after the actual teaching has ceased, and when the player has learnt to feel his own unrestricted strength.

In accordance with the views just expressed, it will be the object of the following chapters to discuss certain subjects in connection with pianoforte-playing which are sure to present themselves to the mind of the thoughtful student, and at the same time to endeavour to indicate the methods which the writer believes, from his experience, to be best adapted to lead towards the achievement of excellence.

II.

TECHNIQUE.

Of late years the demands made by the concert-going public on the executive powers of the pianist have undoubtedly increased to a very considerable extent, as will be evident if we compare the programmes of pianoforte recitals of the present day with those of comparatively few years ago. This is probably owing to the advent of numerous pianists, whose chief object appears to be to eclipse all predecessors in the matter of rapidity and force of execution, and it may be conceded that, as a consequence, pure technique has received more attention and admiration than it deserves. Nevertheless, considered not as an end, but as a means to an end, it is impossible to estimate technique too highly, and we may be almost disposed to agree with the saying attributed to Von Bülow, that for a pianist "three things are necessary—the first is *technique*, the second is *technique*, and the third is *technique!*"

For if it may be said that music is a language, which seems reasonable, since it is addressed to the sense of hearing, and follows its own rules of grammar, then technique is the utterance of that language, and no player whose technique is deficient can express properly his own musical feelings or the ideas of the composer, just as no speaker can speak or recite impressively and convincingly if he is forced to stumble over the pronunciation of every other word.

The opinion is not infrequently expressed, and by cultivated musicians, that the study of technique prevents or interferes with the musical development. But surely this idea is a mistaken one. Everything depends upon the student. If his musical intelligence is dull, he may very likely lean to the side of mechanical excellence, and his interest may be absorbed in its development; but such a one would not be more musical if he possessed less technique. On the other hand, the musically gifted student will welcome every advance in mechanism as an addition to his means of expressing what he feels.

Moreover, it would appear that those who maintain that the study of technique impedes artistic progress make the mistake of limiting the definition of technique to one kind—namely, that adapted to the brilliant execution of difficulties. But since the pianoforte is, by reason of its construction, one of the most mechanical of all instruments, everything must in reality be produced by mechanical means, and there must be a suitable technique for every kind of speech of which it is capable. Thus there is the proper technique for rapid passages, whether of single or double notes, for sonorous chords, for light and delicate *staccato*, for a broad and singing melody, for an infinitely delicate phrase like a whisper, for accompaniment to a melody, even for a

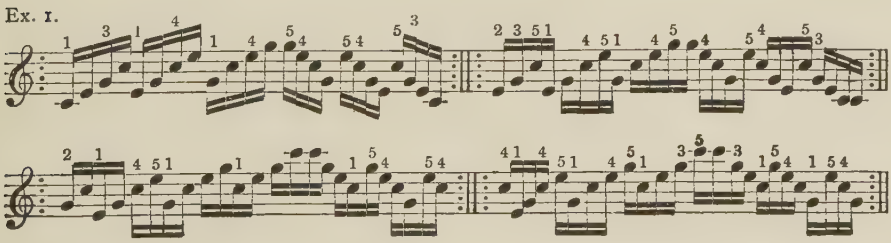
single note, that the right quality of tone may be produced. All these varieties of technique, each of which requires separate and special study, form, taken collectively, what is known as touch, which is really the power of producing perfectly all varieties of effect at will; and it may be observed that not one of those who criticise technique and the study of technique has a word to say against touch.

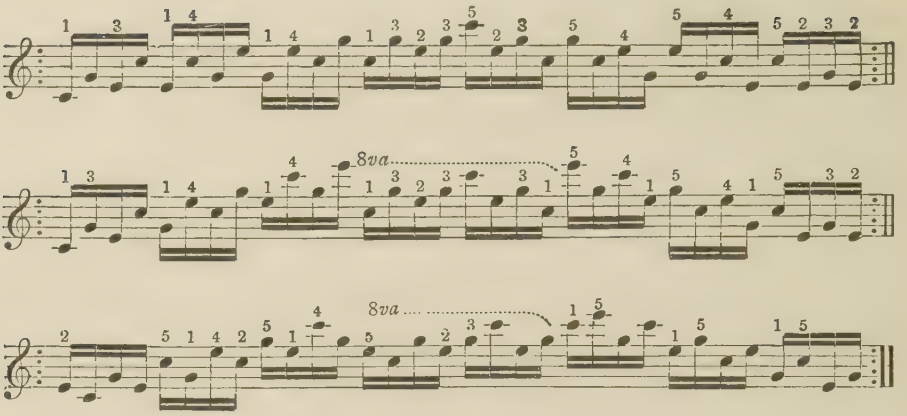
Of the different kinds of technique enumerated above, the first to be studied must necessarily be that which gives general power over the keyboard, conduces to accuracy, and in its highest development leads to *bravura*—in other words, the technique of passage-playing. For the cultivation of this technique most existing studies are written, and a large number of preparatory exercises are necessary before even these are attempted. Such exercises are to be found in sufficient quantity in every pianoforte-school, and need not be enumerated here, our present purpose being rather to examine the principles on which they are written, and to consider how they should be practised.

From the simplest melody to the most elaborate concert-piece, all music, so far as regards its grammatical construction, consists of scales and chords. For example, the succession of notes A, B, forms a scale, or at least part of a scale, and the notes A, C, a chord, and the chord is said to be broken if the two notes are sounded singly, and unbroken if they are sounded together. It follows that the technique of passage-playing must consist of the study of scales and chords, in all keys, and with every possible variety of arrangement. But besides this classification, it is necessary for practical purposes to distinguish between two kinds of passages—namely, those in which the hand is kept in a straight position, and those in which the thumb passes under the fingers, or the fingers over the thumb. Scale-figures which do not extend beyond a compass of five notes, and also most of the broken-chord passages, belong to the first of these divisions, and complete scales and arpeggios to the second.

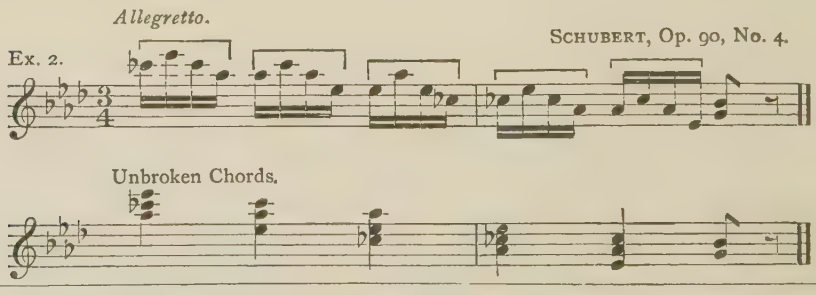
In the practice of many pianoforte teachers, the pupil is made to begin the study of the scales at a very early stage—indeed, soon after he has become acquainted with the notes. This, in the opinion of the writer, is a mistake, and a method decidedly prejudicial to the formation of a brilliant touch. It is far better to defer the study of the complicated movements required by the passing under of the thumb until independence of fingers and precision in striking have been secured by the practice of five-finger exercises (such as are to be found in all instruction-books), and the simpler forms of broken chords, of which the following may serve as examples:—

Ex. 1.

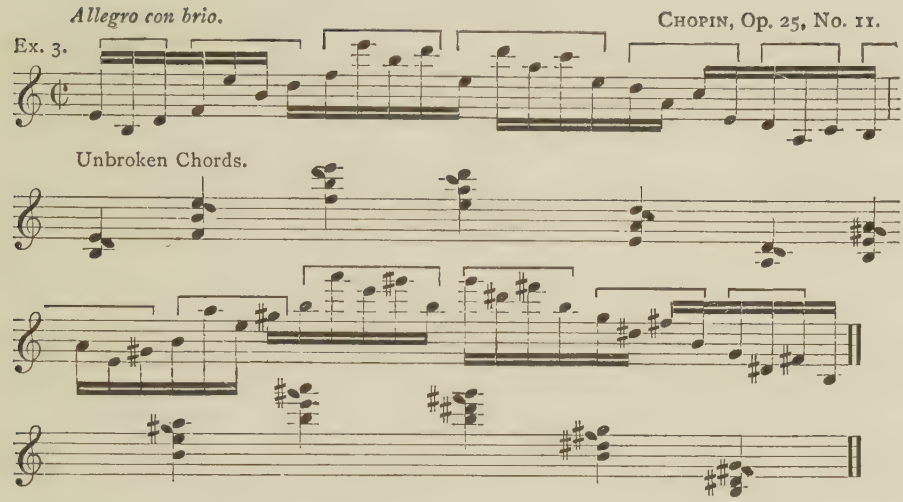




The practice of broken chords has another object in view besides the training of the fingers—it is a material help towards cultivating the power of sight-reading. The student who is accustomed to construct such passages for himself, by taking any given chord and breaking it in the required order, instead of merely practising them from a printed book, will have done much more than improve his execution. He will have gained such an insight into the construction of passages generally as will enable him, on meeting with even elaborate passages in actual compositions, to analyse them at a glance, to perceive the unbroken chords on which they are founded, and thus to realise and read them more quickly and with far greater certainty than would be possible if he were obliged to consider them as a succession of single notes, having no particular relation to each other. This kind of analysis is shown in the two following examples, which differ considerably in degree of complexity, but are alike in principle. The square brackets above the notes point out the chords from which the passage is derived, and, as a necessary consequence, the moments of change of position. The same chords in their unbroken form are shown in the lower staves, and it is only by means of readily recognising the chords in this form, and then breaking them in the proper order, that such passages can be read fluently at first sight:—*



* That the so-called chords in Ex. 3 are not real harmonies is immaterial; the hand grasps each successive position just as readily and securely as it would an ordinary chord.



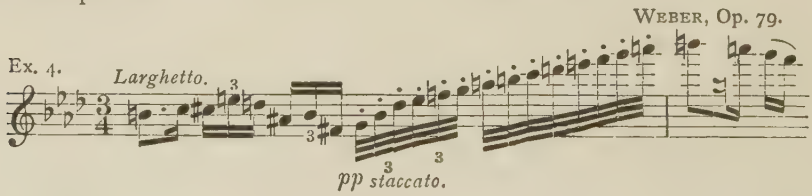
The particular touch for all such technical exercises as those under consideration is essentially a touch of percussion. The fingers are lifted to a considerable height, and fall upon their keys rapidly, and without any great amount of pressure, not only in order to strengthen the muscles and to ensure precision, but also because this kind of touch is the most brilliant, partly on account of the effect which the greater rapidity of the blow has on the quality of the sound produced, and partly for another reason, which may be readily understood from the following experiment. If a few of the keys are depressed silently by the fingers of one hand, and are held down while the fingers of the other hand are used upon their surface with the high and rapid action proper for brilliant passages, a decided and considerable noise of tapping will be heard. Now in all passages played with similar touch the same noise must of course exist in addition to the musical sounds, even though not perceived separately, and must be taken into account; for while it would be ruinous to the performance of a *legato* melody, it is of very definite advantage to a vigorous passage, to which it imparts brilliancy and distinctness, much as the tap of a side-drum acts with regard to orchestral music.

When the practice of scales and complete arpeggios is undertaken, and the thumb has to be passed under the fingers, the principal aims to be kept in view are to avoid any disconnection or break of *legato*, and to preserve the brilliancy. To facilitate the passing of the thumb, the hands are turned slightly inwards, so that a line drawn down the length of the middle finger of the right hand would incline a little more to the left, and a similar line on the left hand a little more to the right, than would be proper in the normal position of a five-finger exercise. The passing under of the thumb takes place gradually, the thumb moving about an inch onward for each note struck, so that it arrives above its own particular key a little before it is required to strike it. When the thumb is underneath the hand its action is somewhat impeded,

and the necessary lifting movement and percussion require special attention, otherwise the brilliancy suffers. Of course, the scales, both diatonic and chromatic, require practising with every possible variety of treatment; for instance, with accent on every third, fourth, or sixth note, as such passages are generally grouped in brilliant compositions; *without* accent, and *pianissimo*, as in scales occurring in cadenzas; with the two hands at varying distances from each other, as a third, sixth, tenth, and double octave or fifteenth, as well as a single octave; and in contrary motion. Minor scales are practised in both forms, melodic and harmonic, and with the same varieties as the major, except that it is of no practical advantage to practise the melodic form in contrary motion.

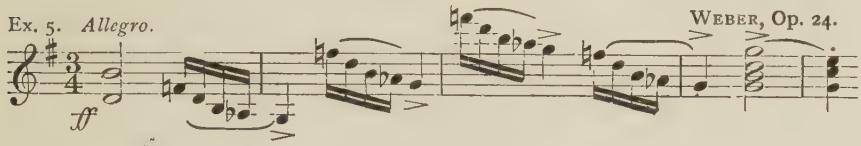
Staccato touch requires action of the wrist, either with or without action of the fingers. In *staccato* passages of single notes, as in Mendelssohn's Prelude in B minor, Op. 35, No. 3, the chief movement is from the wrist, though a certain amount of finger-movement is necessary to ensure accuracy, and to prevent two or three fingers from striking at once. In *staccato* octaves and chords, only wrist-movement is required, the fingers being held perfectly still, in the proper position for striking. This keeping of the fingers motionless is the chief difficulty in octave-playing, since the necessary extension of the hand tightens and impedes the action of the wrist, and there is at first a strong temptation to relieve the tightness by allowing the thumb and little finger to contract whenever the hand is raised. Every student feels this temptation when first beginning the practice of *staccato* octaves, but it must be carefully watched and overcome, as otherwise the octaves will never be free from false notes, occasioned by the fingers not being precisely over the keys they are required to strike.

Staccato passages of single notes are generally played from the wrist, as in the Mendelssohn Prelude referred to above, but when they are too rapid for the wrist to act properly, the *staccato* can be effected by the fingers alone, especially in scale figures of limited compass. This kind of *finger-staccato* is described by Hummel in his "Pianoforte School" as consisting in "hurrying the fingers away from the keys, very lightly and in an inward direction." The following is an example:—

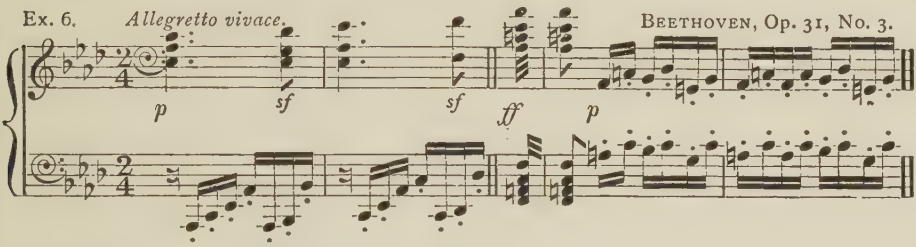


The same inward drawing of the fingers is also of use in short figures of a forcible character, where great articulateness and distinctness are required. In such cases the effect intended is not *staccato*, each note being held for its full value, and the finger snatched away underneath the hand precisely as the next finger falls upon its key, so that at the final note the hand is almost completely closed. Passages requiring the passage of the thumb cannot be played with

this touch, which is, therefore, of very limited application, but very effective when properly introduced. The next example is a good instance of its use :—



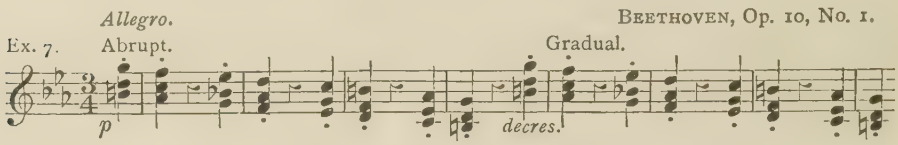
Another kind of *staccato*, in which the notes are not extremely short, but have a certain weight and fulness of tone, is effected by raising the hand to a horizontal position after striking each note, the wrist being kept at a distance of about three inches from the surface of the keys. This touch, which may be called "half-wrist touch," to distinguish it from "full-wrist," in which the hand is thrown as far back as possible, is generally proper for a *staccato* bass, though it may sometimes be used in the right hand also, as in the following example :—



Unbroken chords of a light character and rapid repetition or succession require the same technique as wrist octaves, but powerful chords or octaves necessitate some action of the fore-arm, moving from the elbow, to give them force. Very rarely, however, and only when a metallic and even hard tone is required, should the arm move from the elbow only; in most cases the movement must consist of a combined action of both elbow and wrist, that the blow may be elastic, and not stiff.

In all *staccato* playing, the way in which the key is quitted is as important as that in which it is struck. *Staccato* on the pianoforte is made possible by the action of the dampers, which fall upon the strings directly the key is loosed, and stop the vibration, and therefore the sound. But the speed of the falling damper is governed by the speed of the rising key, and if the key were made to rise gently and comparatively slowly, the gently falling damper would not have sufficient force to check the vibrations instantly, and the cessation of the sound would be less abrupt than would be the case if the damper were allowed to fall with its full force. Accordingly, if in *staccato* playing the fingers quit the keys rapidly and vertically, the dampers will act with the full force of their springs, and the sounds will cease with corresponding abruptness; while if they are gently drawn from the keys towards the player, the keys will rise more gradually, following as it were the retreating fingers, and the result will be a softening and quieting of the *staccato*. A good effect may be produced in

the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata in C minor, Op. 10, No. 1, by employing the two kinds of treatment in succession, and the example may well serve to illustrate the point under consideration :—



Forcible chords vary in their effect no less than delicate ones, according to the manner in which the keys are quitted, but here the mechanical action is somewhat different. Such chords are played heavily, and the pressure would prevent the sliding movement just described from being under control. Instead, therefore, of drawing back the hand, the wrist rises immediately before the keys are loosed, so that at the moment of quitting it is slightly higher than at the moment of striking. The effect of this movement is to lessen the pressure, and to allow the rising keys to follow the finger-tips closely, with the result of rounding off the termination of the sound. As an example, such chords as those at the commencement of Schubert's Fantasia in C, Op. 15, should be treated in this manner, the effect being far richer and less dry than if the chords were made to end abruptly. The same method, in nearly every case, is suitable for isolated chords, such as frequently occur at the close of a composition. Chords which are intended to end abruptly, the hands springing vertically from the keys, are generally marked *secco*.

For the playing of melody, the technique differs entirely from that which has just been described—indeed, it may be considered as the exact opposite of brilliant touch, both as to its method and its results. In melody-playing the slight tapping noise of the finger-tip, spoken of above as an advantage, would be decidedly injurious, and must be prevented. Accordingly, instead of falling upon its key, the finger is allowed to touch the surface *before* the note is due, and the sound is produced by pressure, more or less firm according to the strength of tone required, and with as little percussion as possible. But if this pressure be made with a stiffened finger, the result will be a hard and disagreeable tone; to produce the most musical and singing quality it is necessary that the finger, however firm the pressure, should be in an elastic condition, and it is therefore important that every joint of the finger and hand, and even the wrist, should be kept loose, and should yield slightly with each pressure of the finger-tip.

This kind of touch is described by Thalberg (*L'art du Chant appliqué au Piano*) as being executed with a "boneless hand," though the expression seems scarcely to convey the idea of the amount of force and pressure required.

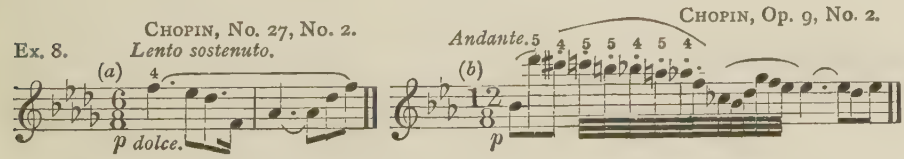
The best method of cultivating this *cantabile* touch is to practise with a slight forward rise of the wrist for each note played, the movement, which should feel loose and easy, to be made at the moment of reaching the full depth to which the key descends, and not earlier. This movement, the object of

which is to loosen the joints, can be dispensed with, or, at least, considerably lessened, when the correct habit has been acquired. Perhaps the *cantabile* portions of most of Hummel's compositions afford the best opportunities of practising melody-touch, for two reasons: firstly, because they generally consist of notes of various lengths, short as well as long, and it will be found more difficult to make the necessary movement on short notes than on long ones, and, secondly, because they frequently lie in the register of about an octave above the treble stave, a part of the keyboard which in nearly all instruments is the most difficult to make *sing*.

It is interesting to prove the effect of elasticity of touch on tone by a simple experiment. Let a key, or a few keys in succession, be pressed down (not struck from a distance), first with the end of a piece of wood, say a penholder, and then with the end of a cylindrical piece of india-rubber, using the same amount of pressure in each case. On listening attentively it will be found that by far the best tone, both for quality and for sustaining power, is produced by the india-rubber; indeed, if the latter is sufficiently elastic it will be impossible to produce a bad tone with it, however forcible the blow.

So true is it that quality of tone depends on elasticity, that each separate finger produces a different quality of tone, according to the degree of elasticity which it naturally possesses; and although each finger of a well-trained hand should of course be able to imitate the others, so that the touch may be perfectly equal, yet it is of advantage to recognise their natural tendencies, and, where possible, to employ the particular finger best adapted to produce the quality of tone required. For example, it is generally an advantage to play the first note of a melody, especially if of a *dolce* character, with the fourth finger, as being the most elastic (Ex 8*a*). The little finger, being so much shorter than the others, has to be straightened in use, in order to equalize the power of the five fingers, and this straightening tends to stiffen the finger and to deprive it of some of its elasticity. On this account it is not well adapted for sustained melody, but in soft delicate phrases it possesses sufficient elasticity to be very serviceable, and in such cases is frequently to be preferred to the stronger fingers (Ex. 8*b*). The natural tone of the middle finger is firm and full, because it carries the equally-balanced weight of the hand, and it is well adapted for sonorous and sustained notes (Ex. 9). Also the thumb, provided the position of the hand allows of the pressure being made with the soft and fleshy part, and not with the edge of the thumb-nail, gives full and well-sustained tones, and melodies are often given almost exclusively to the thumb, as in Ex. 10. The fore-finger, which is the strongest, is also the least elastic of the fingers, and its use in melody is generally as limited as possible.

Ex. 8.



Ex. 9. *Larghetto.* *ten.* *ten.* *ten.* WEBER, Op. 79.

Ex. 10. SCHUMANN, Op. 28, No. 2.

Another attribute of good cantabile-playing, equally important with quality of tone, is the production of *legato*. It is one of the chief weaknesses of the pianoforte as a musical instrument, that owing to its mechanical construction a perfect *legato* is an impossibility. The singer can vocalise a succession of sounds on one vowel, without the slightest break in the continuity of sound, but the pianist has to deal with separate strings and separate hammers, and therefore each sound sings, as it were, a separate syllable, with a more or less hard consonant at the beginning of it! To minimise the evil, and so to approach as closely as possible to a perfect *legato*, it is important to observe that a succession of notes of *equal strength*, however perfect the mechanical connection may be, will never sound smooth. The recurring percussion, particularly if the notes are of equal length, seems to attract the ear, and to destroy all sense of continuity. But if the same notes are played with *gradation* of strength, either *crescendo* or *diminuendo*, the effect of *legato* is at once felt, and the disturbing percussion is unnoticed. Everything then

depends on variety and gradation of tone, and it is an excellent plan, in studying an ordinary *legato* melody, to determine that no two consecutive notes shall be of precisely the same strength. The amount of variety must, of course, depend on the character of the phrase, but very slight differences are sufficient for the purpose, and if an actual *crescendo* or *diminuendo* should appear unsuitable, it is always possible to increase towards the middle and diminish towards the end of the phrase, or *vice versâ*, according to circumstances.

Perfect control over such delicate *nuances* implies perfect control over the fingers—in other words, perfect technique, and can only be acquired by those who possess a sufficiently sensitive ear, together with the necessary perseverance in study. Attentive listeners will agree that command over all gradations of tone between *pianissimo* and *fortissimo*, and perhaps especially between *pianissimo* and *piano*, is a chief characteristic of all great players. It is, indeed, far more than velocity or force, the sign and token of pianoforte technique of the highest class.

III.

FINGERING.

Among the essentials which contribute to the formation of a good technique, none can be of greater importance than a practical and systematic method of fingering. Such a method may possibly be acquired, as a matter of habit, by any student who, through long years of training, follows carefully the marks by which the particular fingers are indicated, but more than this is required if the player is to render himself capable of attacking technical difficulties of a kind to which he is unaccustomed, such as he will be sure to meet with in the works of the best and most original of modern composers. For this purpose he must understand, not merely the rules of fingering, but the reasons which have called those rules into existence, as well as the cases in which exceptions become permissible, or even necessary.

The main object of fingering is the connection of tones. Were it otherwise it would be quite possible to play all passages of single notes with a single finger, and the extraordinary expertness and facility of players on the dulcimer proves that such a mode of execution would be perfectly feasible, given sufficient practice. On the pianoforte, however, passages so played would obviously be *staccato*, and since *legato* is, in its proper place, an indispensable characteristic of musical performance, it follows that for two consecutive notes two different fingers are required, and so on.

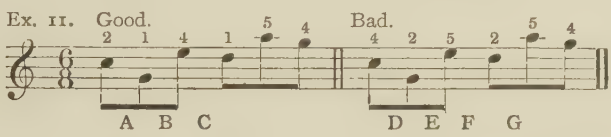
In the earliest lessons, written for beginners, the compass is limited to five notes, that the pupil may first become accustomed to the normal position of the hand, in which each of five consecutive keys has its particular finger, and is played by that and no other throughout. This normal position is the foundation of all fingering; it is used wherever possible, even in the most complex passages, and all deviations from its simple rule are occasioned by the necessity for escaping from its narrow bounds and altering the position of the hand without breaking the *legato*. There are various ways of changing the position, of which the three most important are *extension*, *contraction*, and *passing of the thumb*. By extension is understood the stretching of the hand beyond the normal position of five consecutive notes of the diatonic scale; contraction draws the fingers closer together, so that the whole hand covers the interval of a fourth, or less; and passing the thumb under one of the fingers brings about a change into a fresh normal position, having for its starting-point the note on which the thumb falls.

Owing to its greater flexibility in a lateral direction, the thumb should, if possible, always be one of the two fingers engaged in changing position by either

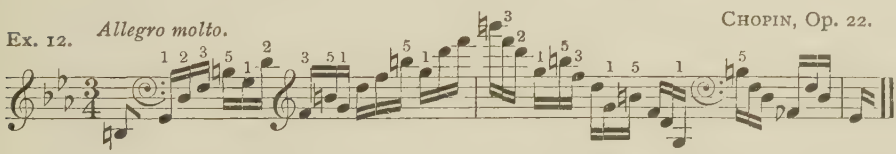
extension or contraction. The following example, of which the first bar contains good and the second bad fingering, will serve to illustrate this advantage. The points to be observed are lettered for reference, and are as follows :—

A is an extension to the thumb.
B is an extension from the thumb.
C is a contraction to the thumb.
D is an extension to the fore-finger.
E is an extension from the fore-finger.
F is a contraction to the fore-finger.
G is an extension from the fore-finger.

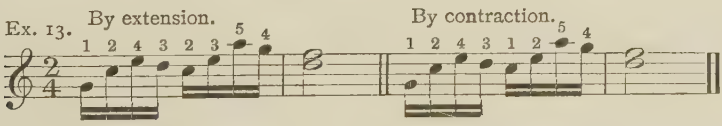
The contraction between the fore-finger and little finger, shown at F, is probably the worst that can be made, and should always be avoided :—



By means of alternate extensions and contractions, passages of very wide extent may be covered without break of *legato*, for example :—



Very often a passage can be correctly rendered by means of either extension or contraction. In such cases, contraction is generally to be preferred, especially if the passage be rapid, for the reason that extension always tends to tighten the hand, and thus renders velocity more difficult and fatiguing :—



The passing of the thumb is employed chiefly in scales and *arpeggios*. In ascending scales for the right hand and descending scales for the left, the thumb usually follows the middle and fourth fingers alternately, while in the contrary directions these fingers pass over the thumb in like manner. In *arpeggios*, the thumb is generally used once in each octave, and on the same note.

The more frequently the thumb passes, the greater is the difficulty of playing at a high rate of speed. On this account the scale shown in Ex. 14 can be played more rapidly with the fingering marked than with the ordinary scale fingering. The earlier composers appear to have been fully aware of this difficulty, as they rarely, if ever, required a rapid scale to be played by one hand. Instead of this, they were accustomed to divide the scale between the two hands, using them alternately, with the object of avoiding the passing of the thumb (Ex. 15), and the same method has been occasionally employed by modern composers (Ex. 16):—

Ex. 14. BEETHOVEN, Op. 58, Finale.

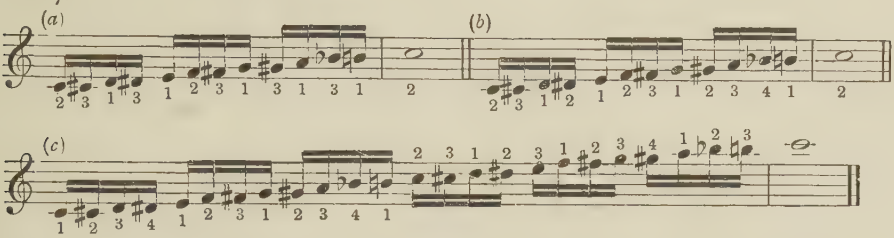
Ex. 15. BACH, Chromatic Fantasia.

Ex. 16. PAGANINI-LISZT, Caprice, No. 2.

The difficulty of passing the thumb in rapid *tempo* is, perhaps, most noticeable in the chromatic scale, the fingering for which should always be chosen with due regard to its speed and character. Thus the fingering in Ex. 17*a*, where the thumb passes five times within the octave, is powerful but not rapid, and is best adapted for brilliant and rhythmical scales, at a moderate rate of speed; that given at *b* is lighter and more rapid, and is well suited for such

scales as occur in cadenzas, while the fingering shown at *c* is the most rapid of all:—

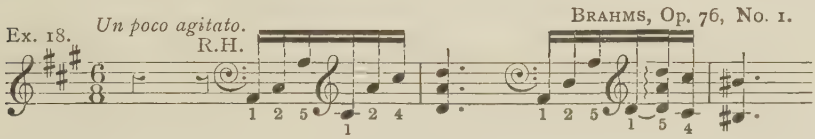
Ex. 17.

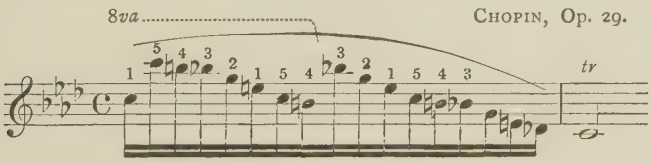


This last method, the invention of which is attributed to Thalberg, has the peculiarity that instead of repeating itself in each octave, the repetition takes place in every alternate octave. On this account the fingering is, perhaps, more difficult, but it is well worth the trouble of learning.

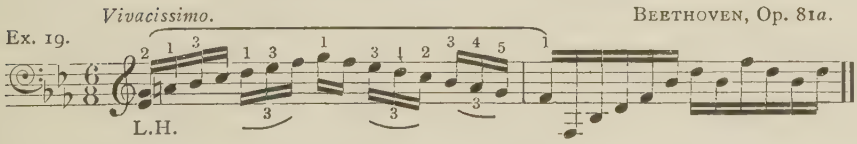
In certain cases it is possible to pass the thumb under (or sometimes over) the little finger, by which means arpeggios of great extension can be made feasible (Ex. 18). With this fingering the connection is necessarily more or less imperfect, but with practice, and possibly by the help of the pedal, the break can be made so slight as not to disturb the listener's sense of *legato*. Scale-passages, as well as arpeggios, may also be fingered in this manner, in suitable cases (Ex. 19):—

Ex. 18.





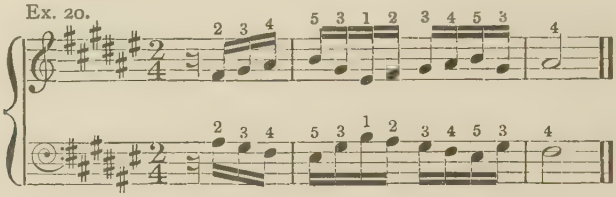
Ex. 19.



All rules of fingering apply to the left hand, as a matter of course, equally with the right. But in comparing the fingering of the two hands it must be observed that since one hand is an exact counterpart of the other, but reversed, so the fingering of one hand is suitable for the other, but in the

opposite direction. In accordance with this principle, all passages in contrary motion should, if possible, be fingered so that the same finger of each hand is employed at the same moment, particularly when the black and white keys happen to correspond in both hands, as in the following example:—

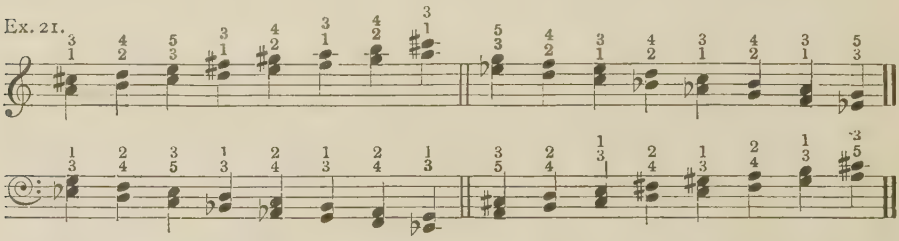
Ex. 20.



But it is in choosing a fingering for double scales—that is, scales of thirds or sixths—that this correspondence of the hands is most noticeable and important. In scales of thirds the little finger is used once, and in scales of sixths the middle finger once, in each octave, and the formation of a regular and systematic method for such scales depends on fixing the proper place for the little or middle finger respectively.

Of course, according to the principle just observed, the fingering of an ascending right hand scale should be identical with that of a descending left hand scale, and *vice versâ*. Now, in endeavouring to apply this principle to double scales, a curious coincidence comes to light; we find that the two hands agree as to position with regard to black and white keys, not in any one scale, but in any two scales of which one contains the same number of sharps as the other has flats. For example, the order of black and white keys in the scales of A with three sharps and E flat with three flats is the same, and the fingering of A with the right hand must therefore be correct for E flat with the left hand, the movement being taken in opposite directions. This will be readily understood on comparing the scales as given in the following example:—

Ex. 21.



Working out this fundamental idea through all the major scales (the minors require some deviations) we arrive at the following rules, which differ considerably from the fingering given in most instruction-books, but which will be found of the greatest service, both as facilitating the execution and as a help towards committing the fingering to memory.*

* The fingering of Double Scales has been treated at length by the writer in his Primer on the subject (Novello & Co.).

Scales in Thirds.

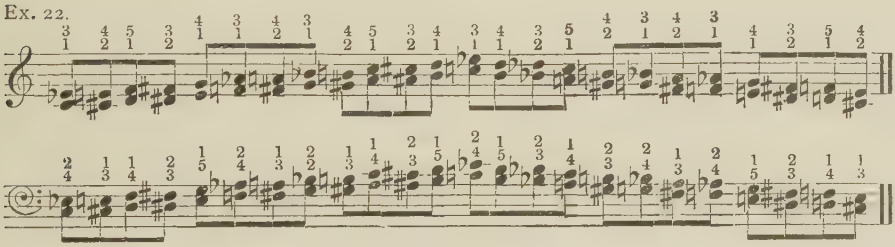
R.H. sharp scales as far as five sharps have the little finger on the fifth degree.
L.H. sharp scales as far as six sharps have the little finger on the note A.
R.H. flat scales as far as six flats have the little finger on the note G.
L.H. flat scales as far as five flats have the little finger on the sixth degree.

Scales in Sixths.

R.H. sharp scales as far as five sharps have the middle finger on the sixth degree.
L.H. sharp scales as far as six sharps have the middle finger on the note G.
R.H. flat scales as far as six flats have the middle finger on the note A.
L.H. flat scales as far as five flats have the middle finger on the fifth degree.

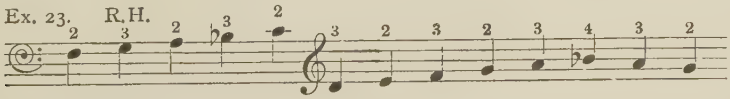
In addition to the three principal ways of changing position referred to on page 14, there are other expedients, each of great value in suitable cases, though the opportunities for their employment are of less frequent occurrence. For instance, one finger can be passed over or under another, instead of over the thumb. In modern practice, this method is usually only employed for passing from a white to a black key in ascending, or from a black to a white key in descending, the finger which is underneath the other being used for the white key. Perhaps the best example of its use is the fingering of the chromatic double scale given below. The movements of the ascending right hand are available for the left hand in descending, and *vice versâ* :—

Ex. 22.



The little finger is best adapted for being passed over, or for passing under, on account of its shortness, while the middle finger, being the longest, is almost unavailable. Strangely enough, however, the earliest experimenters in the art of fingering appear to have considered this very finger the most suitable for the purpose, as in the scale-fingering shown in the following example, which is from the "Orgel oder Instrument Tabulatur," by Ammerbach (Leipzig, 1571) :—

Ex. 23. R.H.



Another method of changing position is by sliding a finger from a black key to a white one (Ex. 24*a*), or, more rarely, from one white key to another (Ex 24*b*). In making the latter movement the finger must slide *obliquely* from

one key to the next, since if it were to move in a line parallel to the edge of the keyboard the pressure against the side of the second key would check the movement and break the *legato* :—

Schumann, Op. 82, No. 7.

Ex. 24. (*a*)

pp

Schumann, Op. 134.

(*b*)

sfz

Although it is not possible to pass from a white to a black key by sliding, the connection between the two can, nevertheless, be perfectly effected by means of a certain use of the thumb, in the following manner: the white key is played by the thumb, and the wrist is then depressed, the hand making at the same time a slight forward movement, the effect of which is to bring the tip of the thumb over the black key, while the white key is still held down by pressure from the root of the thumb, near to the wrist; the black key can then be played by simply raising the wrist to its usual position. This method is occasionally of great value, and is well worth the trouble of acquiring. An instance of its application is given in the next example, at N.B. :—

Mendelssohn, Op. 54, Var. 14.

Ex. 25.

Adagio.

N.B. N.B.

There remains for consideration one more mode of changing position, of the greatest use in the fingering of fugues and other polyphonic compositions—namely, the substitution of one finger for another on the same key, without repetition of the sound (Ex. 26). Such substitutions involve a contraction of

the hand, and the remarks already made on contractions generally (see page 15) will apply here. Thus the changes $\overset{\frown}{12}$, $\overset{\frown}{13}$, $\overset{\frown}{14}$, and even $\overset{\frown}{15}$, are preferable to $\overset{\frown}{24}$, $\overset{\frown}{25}$, or $\overset{\frown}{35}$:—

Ex. 26. SCHUMANN, Op. 124, No. 6.

As a rule, the change of finger should be effected instantaneously, that there may be but one perceptible effort, and that the fingers may become free for the succeeding notes, yet there are cases in which the movement of the parts necessitates a delay in making the change (Ex. 27), and may occasionally even require more than one change on the same note (Ex. 28):—

Ex. 27. BACH, Fugue 4, Part 1.

Ex. 28. THALBERG, "L'art du Chant, No. 11."

Allegretto.

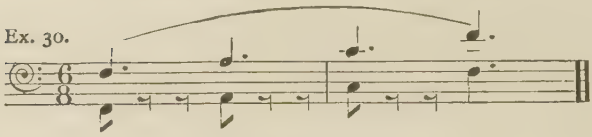
p

In fingered editions, *legato* octaves are frequently marked with a change of finger on one of the two notes forming the octave, as in Ex. 29. No doubt such a change improves the connection of the particular note to which it is applied, but it is at the cost of destroying that of the other, the effect really produced being that shown in Ex. 30. The remedy is worse than the evil, and changes of this kind, which, by the way, are denounced by Von Bülow as "the last resource of the helpless amateur," should always be avoided:—

Ex. 29. BEETHOVEN, Op. 2, No. 3.

Allegro assai.

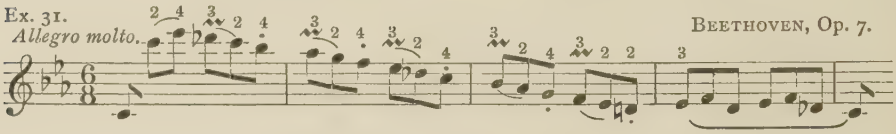
Ex. 30.



Generally speaking, changes of finger, however valuable as a means of providing fresh fingers wherewith to play notes which would otherwise be out of reach, should be employed sparingly, as their too constant use tends to produce a feeble and unrhythmical style of playing.

The object of all the rules of fingering hitherto discussed has been the production of a good *legato*, but there are cases in which the intention in choosing the fingering may be to *prevent legato*. If, for example, the phrasing of a passage requires that certain notes should be very definitely separated, the best fingering, other circumstances permitting, will be one by which they cannot possibly be connected (Ex. 31). By the use of such fingering the difficulty of the phrasing will be considerably lessened:—

Ex. 31. *Allegro molto.*



BEETHOVEN, Op. 7.

At the present day, all the important works of the great masters appear in numerous editions very fully fingered by various editors, more or less competent, and doubtless designed to assist the intelligent student, although in the opinion of the writer the result is frequently rather in the direction of puzzling him. The methods of fingering presented in these editions differ considerably from each other, but on examination they will generally be found to agree in three points, which may therefore be taken to represent the most modern development of the theory of fingering. It will be worth while to consider these three points, and to try to ascertain their practical value. They are, firstly, the free use of the thumb on the black keys, secondly, the crossing of the hands, and lastly, the employment of different fingers on repeated notes.

With regard to the first point, it has never been possible to dispense entirely with the use of the thumb on black keys; even as far back as the time of Emanuel Bach it was not unconditionally forbidden, though it was ordained that it should be used only "in cases of necessity," and modern music, such, for instance, as Chopin's Etude, Op. 10, No. 5, requires more than a mere abrogation of an obsolete rule—it demands that the free use of the thumb in all positions shall be sedulously studied. The practice of passages in which the thumb is required on black keys should, however, by no means be commenced too early. It is one of the most important principles of good technique that whatsoever is difficult must be played in exactly the same manner as that which is easy, if mastery over the difficulty is to be obtained, and yet many anxious teachers, in the hope of enabling their pupils to use the

thumb freely on the black keys, require them to practise the scales of B flat or E flat with the fingering of the scale of C, before they have properly overcome the difficulties of scale-playing in keys which have a white key for key-note, the inevitable result being an inelegant and clumsy execution. The only sound method of working in such matters is to make sure, in the first instance, that passages in simple positions are played with perfection of finger-movement, and then to imitate that perfection in similar passages which are placed in positions of greater difficulty.

Crossing the hands is, of course, perfectly in place when it is desired by the composer, in which cases it often produces effects which could not be obtained without great difficulty in any other way; but it is not possible to say much in its favour when it is employed in a simple passage which might be perfectly well played without it, and where the composer certainly did not intend it to be used. Some modern editors appear to have an extraordinary fondness for this kind of arrangement, but it is difficult to see what advantage there can be in playing passages such as those given in Ex. 32 in the manner shown at *b* and *d*, instead of using the right hand alone, as the composer intended (*a*, *c*).

Ex. 32.

(*a*) As written.

BEETHOVEN, Op. 58.

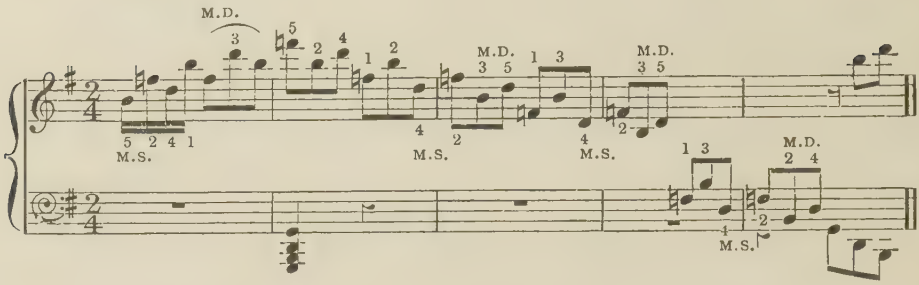
(*b*) Peters Edition.

M.D. M.S. M.S. M.D. M.D. M.S.

(*c*) As written.

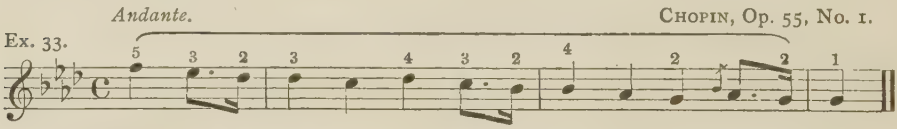
BEETHOVEN, Op. 58, Finale.

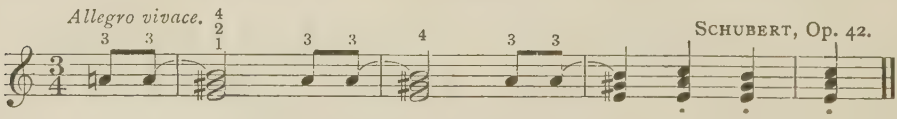
(*d*) Peters Edition.



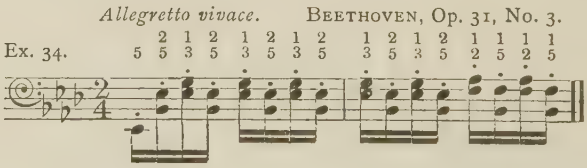
The case is different with regard to the third of the three points referred to above—the change of finger on repeated notes. Here the principle is undeniably sound, but as applied in modern editions it is frequently carried to excess, the mere fact of a note being repeated, even after a considerable lapse of time, being taken to imply a change of finger. This is not necessary, and may often prove a disadvantage, as tending to give a different quality of tone to the second of the repeated notes. What is really advisable may be stated in the following two general rules—firstly, that in simple repetitions of single notes there should be a change of finger if the accent fall on the second, but not if it fall on the first note (Ex. 33); and secondly, that the finger should always be changed if the second of the repeated notes appears in a different part to the first. The operation of this last rule may be seen in Ex. 34, in which the repeating E flat, and afterwards F, appears in the lower and upper of the two parts alternately, with a change of finger for each repetition:—

Ex. 33.





Ex. 34.



The same rule holds good in *legato* as well as *staccato*—indeed, it may be considered even more important, since if the same finger were used for repeated notes in *legato*, either the connection would be defective or else the endeavour to prevent this fault would probably prevent the clear repetition of the note (Ex. 35):—

Ex. 35. *Allegro.* BEETHOVEN, Op. 76.

BEETHOVEN, Op. 79. *Andante.*

Groups of three or more repeated notes are always to be played with change of finger, and generally with the weakest note of the group falling to the thumb, while the accent is given by either the middle or fourth finger :—

Ex. 36.

In the rendering of certain ornaments it often happens that a note is followed by another of the same pitch, not indeed immediately, but after the interposition of one very rapid note, the final note taking the accent. In these cases the technique is not unlike that of repeated notes, and the final note should be played with a fresh finger, just as though the intervening note had not been present (Ex. 37) :—

Ex. 37. Written.

Played.

Repetitions of notes in chords are frequently marked with a change of fingers, but do not really require it, as the wrist possesses sufficient elasticity to ensure the clear repetition without the assistance of any action of the fingers. In the opinion of the writer, the fingering given at *a* in the following example is preferable to that shown at *b*, which is copied from the edition by Klindworth :—

Ex. 38. (*a*) SCHUMANN, Op. 17.

(*b*)

In pianoforte music, the particular fingering to be used is marked by means of numerals, each finger being indicated by its proper number, but unfortunately the English system of numbers differs from that in use in all other countries, a difference which has been the cause of much unnecessary trouble to students. How the discrepancy arose, or, having arisen, why it should have endured so long, is not clear, but the English method would appear to possess the greatest antiquity, as the earliest specimens of fingering of which we have any knowledge were marked by the numbers, 1, 2, 3, 4, for the fingers, the thumb being indicated by O, instead of the more modern X. The other method, in which the thumb is numbered 1, and the four fingers 2, 3, 4, and 5, seems to have originated in Italy—at any rate, it is spoken of as the "Italian manner of fingering" in a work published in 1740, entitled "The Harpsichord Illustrated and Improv'd"— and was most probably introduced thence into Germany and France early in the eighteenth century, when it first made its appearance in those countries. At the present day, when musical compositions do not remain in the countries of their birth, but are heard and played over the whole artistic world, the retention of the older method seems an anomaly, and it is satisfactory to observe that almost all English composers and publishers are now making use of the so-called Continental method, so that the ultimate disappearance of the disturbing difference can only be a question of time.

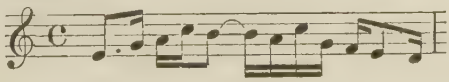
IV.

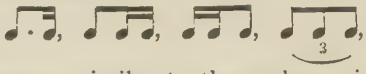
RHYTHM.

We now come to the consideration of the intellectual side of pianoforte-playing, as distinguished from the mechanical and the emotional. Mechanism must of course always be present, that the notes may be correctly and readily produced, but in addition to this it is necessary, if the music is to be intelligible to the listener, that its rhythm should be made clear. Strictly defined, at least with respect to the study of composition, rhythm means the division of the music into periods and sections, thus bearing the same relation to music that metre does to verse; but for practical purposes rhythm must be taken to mean the art of so playing that the division of the music into bars, and the sub-division of those bars, shall be intelligible. It should never be forgotten that the listener has not the advantage possessed by the player of seeing the written music, but must receive all his impressions through the sense of hearing only, and that his power of understanding must therefore depend on his being able to perceive the equal duration of the bars, and the regularly recurring accents at the beginnings of the bars, or of portions of them. Consequently Time, or the proportion of note-values, and Accent form the two essentials of rhythm which require the attention of the student.

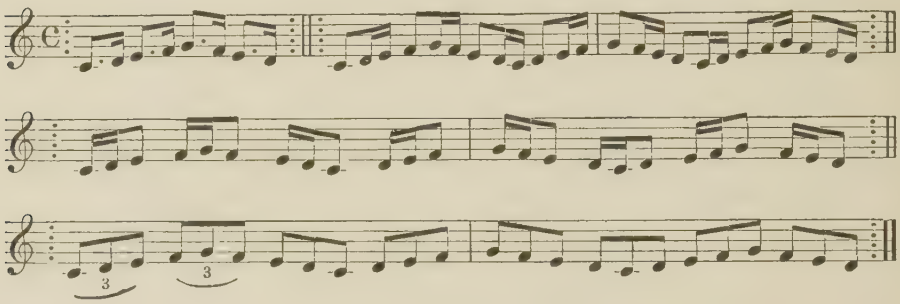
Beginners, especially those not gifted with a strong sense of rhythm, usually experience very great difficulty in learning to play "in time," but it would appear that much of this difficulty is due to an unpractical method of study. Time is the arithmetic of music, and the mistake made is in considering it as a question of addition, whereas it is really one of division. Thus, in analysing such a bar as Ex. 39, the pupil endeavours to realise that the first note, a dotted quaver, has a certain duration, that the three following notes are three times as quick, tnat the next note is held on over the third beat of the bar, that in the last group the second note is twice as long as the others, and that the *whole added together* make up one bar! A far simpler and more practical view is to divide the bar at once into four beats of crotchet value, and each beat into four parts, and then to realise that in the first beat only the first and fourth of these sub-divisions are audible; in the second beat, the first, second, and third; in the third beat, the second, third, and fourth; and in the fourth beat, the first, second, and fourth:—

Ex. 39.



The power of making such sub-divisions easily and correctly may be most readily acquired by taking the first five notes of a scale—so that the attention may not be distracted by considerations of fingering or order of notes—and practising them, ascending and descending, with every variety of rhythm, such as  , and so on. The result will be a series of passages similar to those shown in Ex. 40, but it is not advisable that such exercises should be written out in full; they should rather be constructed by the pupil, the particular form of rhythm being given by the teacher :—

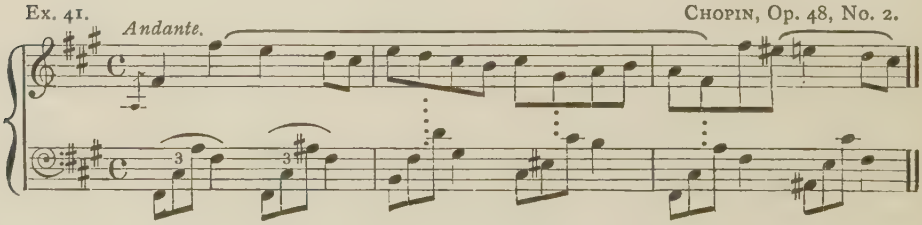
Ex. 40.



Among the various difficulties which have to be met, perhaps the most troublesome is the combination of dissimilar kinds of division, such as that of three equal notes with two or four, of five notes with two, and so on. The proper treatment of these difficulties varies with the *tempo;* if slow, it is a matter of arithmetic, if rapid, of independence of the hands and of the power of hearing two discrepant movements at the same time.

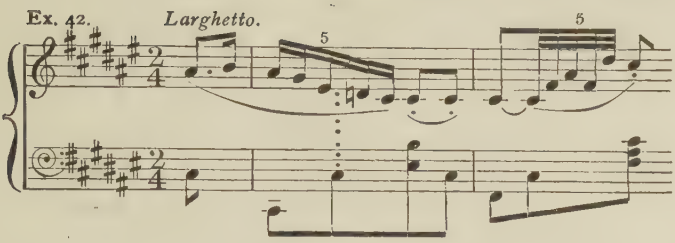
The arithmetic of two notes against three is very simple, each of the two notes must be equal to one and a half of the notes forming the group of three. The place of the second of the two notes must therefore be midway between the second and third of the three (Ex. 41). Similarly, the place of the second of two notes in combination with a group of five must be midway between Nos. 3 and 4 (Ex. 42), or with a group of seven, between Nos. 4 and 5 (Ex. 43) :—

Ex. 41. CHOPIN, Op. 48, No. 2.

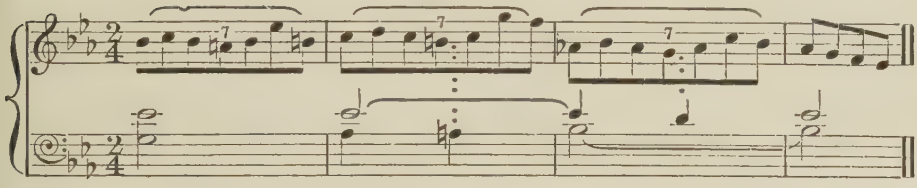


CHOPIN, Op. 15, No. 2.

Ex. 42. *Larghetto.*



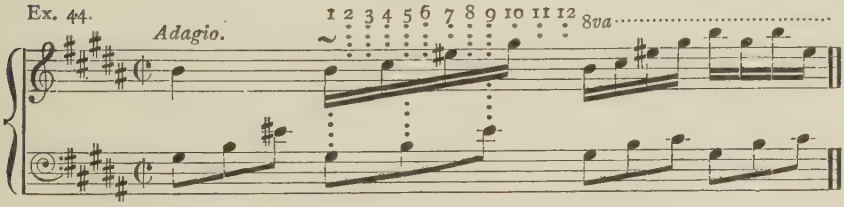
Ex. 43. SCHUMANN, Op. 9. "Eusebius."



The calculation required to determine the places in a combination of three notes with four is rather more complex, since it will be necessary to divide the whole group into twelve equal parts, in order to find the place of each note. If this is done, the notes will be found to fall on the numbers 1, 4, 5, 7, 9, and 10, thus:—

BEETHOVEN, Op. 73.

Ex. 44. *Adagio.*



But this method of procedure is too cumbrous to be practically useful, save in very slow *tempo*, and the best way of practising such passages, as likewise all kinds of combinations in rapid *tempo*, is to play them with each hand alternately for a considerable number of repetitions, always preserving the *tempo* unaltered, until both hands have acquired the habit of playing at the correct rate of speed, after which the combination can be effected without

difficulty. The following example may serve to make clear the manner of working :—

Ex. 45. CHOPIN, Op. 66.

Allegro. *To be repeated many times.*

When a group consisting of a dotted quaver and a semiquaver is combined with a triplet of quavers, the proper rendering depends upon the *tempo*. In slow time, the semiquaver takes its proper place after the third note of the triplet (Ex. 46), but in rapid movement, and particularly in music of the time of Bach and Handel, the semiquaver must be struck together with the third note of the triplet (Ex. 47) :—

Ex. 46. *Largo.* CHOPIN, Op. 58.

Ex. 47. *Allegro.* BACH, Toccata.

Before quitting the subject of combined rhythms, reference must be made to a certain kind of false combination, frequently employed by Schumann, among other composers, which is too important to pass unnoticed. Two examples are

given below (Ex. 48), the effect intended by the first being that of two notes against three, and by the second that of three notes against eight. It will be observed that if any such example be played strictly as written, the proper effect will be missed, because one note is made to supply the place of two, which two, if they were both present, would not occur at the same moment. Thus the third note of the first example, E, if played in its proper place as the second of two quavers, will be too early to form the third note of a triplet; on the other hand, if the grouping of three be strictly observed, the note E, as third note of the triplet, will be too late, and will spoil the equal movement of the melody. The only course, therefore, is to play the note in question a trifle later than its true place as second of two notes, and at the same time a trifle earlier than its place as third note of three. By these means the difference is equalized and spread over the whole group, a distribution which requires some judgment and considerable practice, but which is nevertheless perfectly feasible and satisfactory.

Ex. 48. *Allegro.* SCHUMANN, Op. 92.

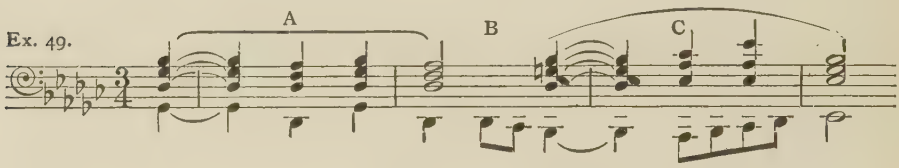
Molto Allegro. SCHUMANN, Op. 99, No. 2.

The necessity for the second constituent of rhythm—Accent—has always been recognised, in fact, from the very beginning of music as an art. In the earliest music, which was exclusively vocal, this need was sufficiently supplied by the emphasis given to certain syllables of the text, but with the development of instrumental music, and its constantly increasing complexity, some sign became necessary to indicate the placing of the accent, and accordingly the music was divided into portions of equal duration by vertical lines called bars (about the middle of the seventeenth century), and the strongest accent was given to the first note in each portion or measure. This equal division, and the consequent periodicity of accent, have remained unchanged ever since their

introduction, and, indeed, form an indispensable element in all modern music, in whatsoever variety of time it may be written, whether common or triple, simple or compound. It will not be necessary in this place to describe all these varieties at length, as it may be taken for granted that the reader is well acquainted with them, but there are some few peculiarities of accent which are to be met with by the student of pianoforte music, and which it will therefore be well to consider briefly.

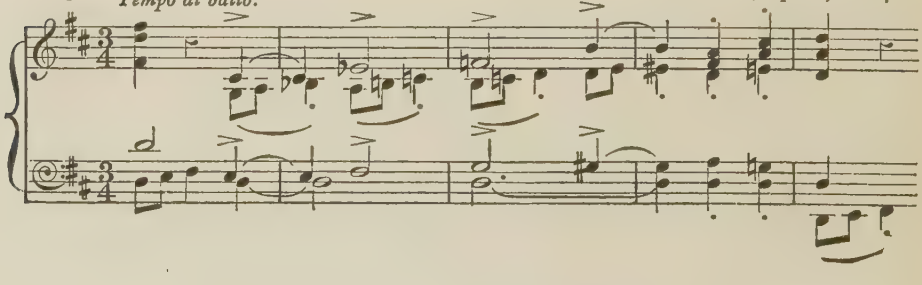
The first of these is syncopation, which is an anticipated accent, caused by an unaccented note being prolonged so as to include in its value the next following accented beat. In all such cases the accent, which cannot fall in its proper place, by reason of the note which should receive it being sustained and not struck, is given to the preceding note. Thus, in the following example, the proper accent can be given in the bar marked B, but not in bars A and C, because in these the first beat is tied from the preceding bars. Accordingly, the accent is given to the first of the two tied notes in each case :—

Ex. 49. SCHUMANN, Op. 12, No. 4.

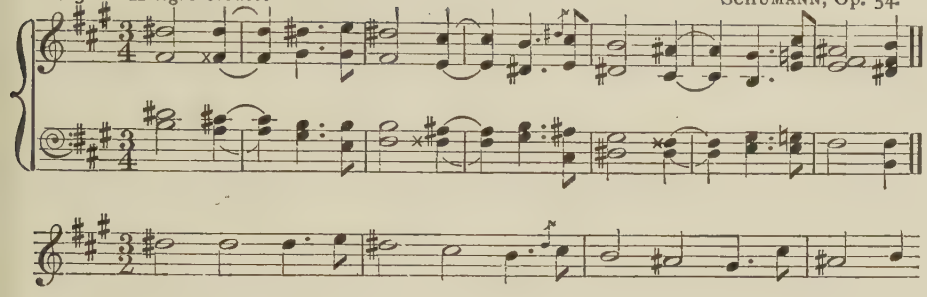


Syncopation, although it displaces the accent, does not disturb the general rhythm, which, unless the syncopation is constant and very prolonged, is always recognisable under the displacement; but there are cases in which an alteration of accent is designed to, and does, give the effect of a temporary change of rhythm. Instances of this are given in the two next examples, in the first of which the rhythm changes for the time being from triple time to duple, with two beats in a bar (Ex. 50), while in the second the triple time is preserved, but the length of the bar is doubled, becoming, as it were, a bar of 3-2 instead of 3-4 (Ex. 51). The effect of this change is shown in the stave underneath the example :—

Ex. 50. *Tempo di ballo.* SCHUMANN, Op. 21, No. 4.

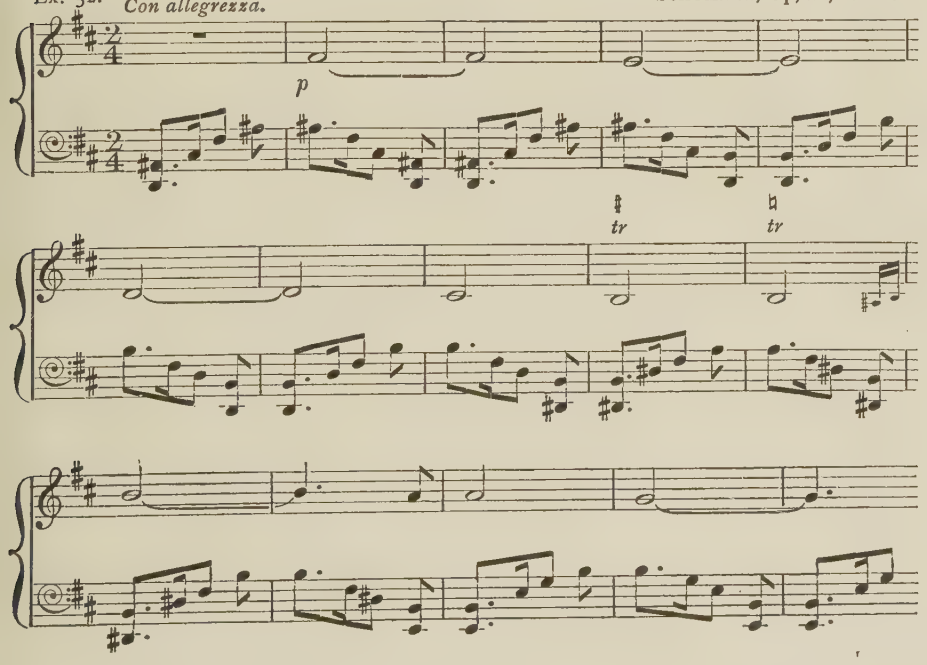


Ex. 51. *Allegro vivace.* SCHUMANN, Op. 54.

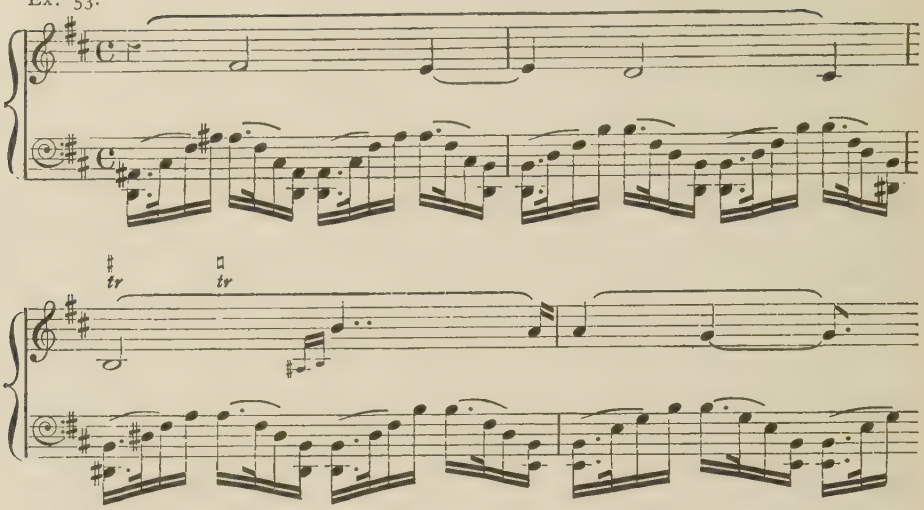


Very often, in quick music, the bar as recognised and accepted by the listener is not the same as that written by the composer, the true bar being in reality composed of two or four of the written bars. This is always the case when the notation of the music gives frequent instances of bars containing but a single tied note, or of rests of the duration of a whole bar, since it is obvious that the accent, by which alone the listener recognises the division into bars, cannot be given to a rest or a tied note. Thus the melody quoted in Ex. 52, meaningless if considered as a series of bars in 2-4 time, becomes perfectly reasonable and intelligible if counted in bars of four beats, one beat to each of the written bars, as in Ex. 53 :—

Ex. 52. *Con allegrezza.* SCHUMANN, Op, 21, No. 8.



Ex. 53.



Sometimes large sections of a composition, and even whole compositions, are constructed in this manner, and the counting of one for each bar expresses the real rhythm of the music far more exactly than the counting of the separate beats of one of the written bars. This is the case with the four *Scherzi* by Chopin, the middle section of the first movement of Beethoven's Sonatina, Op. 79 (quoted on page 54), and in many other instances. It is important that the student should recognise this peculiarity of construction, or rather of notation, and should observe that an equal amount of force cannot with propriety be given to the first note of each bar in such works, since only one in every four bars represents a true first beat of a bar.

Just as several short bars in a quick movement may combine to form one long one, so in slow movements may the converse take place, one long bar being divided into two or more short ones. Practically, this always takes place when, as frequently happens in the slow movements of the classical composers, the music requires as strong an accent on the third beat of the bar as on the first; there are then in reality *two* first beats, and therefore two bars, in each of the written bars.

There are certain advantages connected with the notation of rapid movements in short bars, one being that it makes the music more easy to read, another that it enables the composer to produce an agreeable variety by occasionally introducing the actual rhythm of the short bars. A pleasing example of this variety may be found in the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata in D, Op. 28, the greater part of which has the effect of four beats in a bar, each bar being a combination of four of the written bars, while the rhythm of the *codetta* at the end of the first section is in accordance with the notation, and consists of short bars of triple time. The notation of slow movements in

long bars, on the other hand, does not present any particular advantage, and in some cases may lead to awkwardness. The Second Fantasia in C minor by Mozart presents a striking example of the notation of two short bars as one long one. Here the second portion of the first subject, on its first appearance, enters on the first beat of a bar (Ex. 54), but on its re-appearance later, after the return to the first subject, it begins on the half-bar (Ex. 55), and this interchange of first and third beats continues for nine bars, thus conclusively proving that in the composer's estimation the first and third beats are of equal importance. If, however, the whole work had been written in the true bar as heard by the listener—that is, in bars of half the length of those actually chosen—a certain very inconvenient silence which occurs in the sixteenth bar (Ex. 56, at N.B.) would not have been necessary, and the flow of the melody would have been unbroken, as it is on its second appearance (Ex. 57). As it is, the effect of the long break is so unsatisfactory that the omission of the silent half-bar in performance is a very pardonable liberty :—

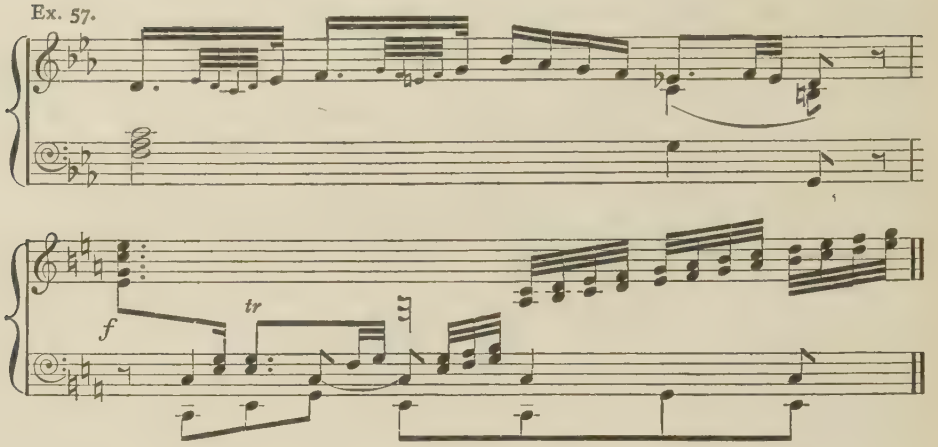
MOZART, Fantasia.

Ex. 54. *Adagio.* *p*

Ex. 55.

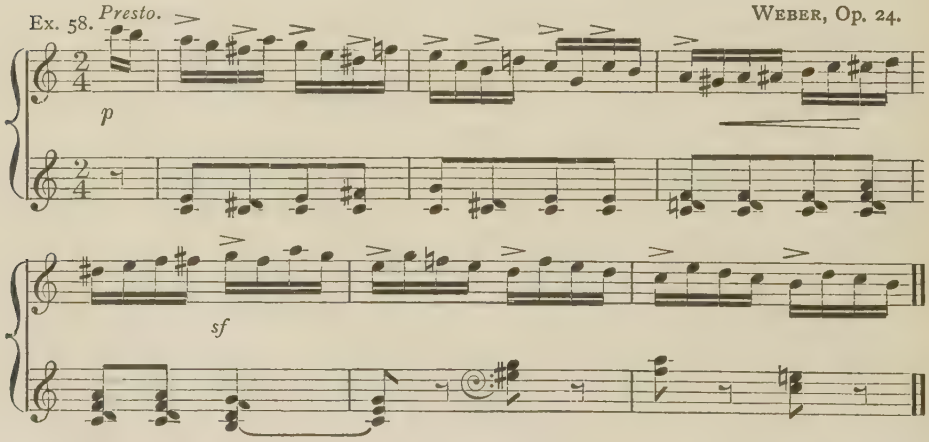
Ex. 56. N.B. *tr* *f*

Ex. 57.



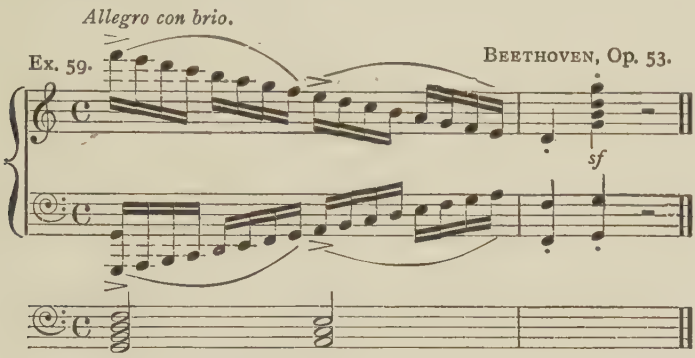
In brilliant passages, the accent often depends less on the bar than on the changes of the harmony by which the passage is accompanied. Thus, the first and second bars of the next example will require four accents in each, not, of course, of any great force, but sufficient to give brilliancy to the passage, the third and fourth bars one accent each (that of bar four falling on the half-bar), to be followed by two accents in each of the succeeding bars, all in accordance with the changes of harmony:—

Ex. 58. *Presto.* WEBER, Op. 24.

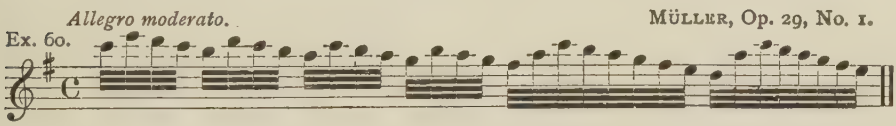


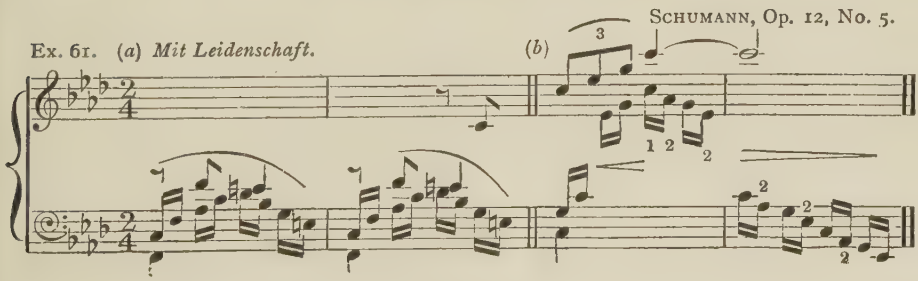
Even an unaccompanied passage will represent, more or less definitely, certain changes of harmony, and the accents in such a passage must agree with the harmonies which it suggests, and by which it might have been accompanied. The following example is an instance of a change of harmony suggested by the accent, although no actual chords are present. The passage should be played, as recommended by Von Bülow in his "Instructive Edition," with an accent

on the half-bar, in order to produce the effect of a change to a chord of A minor, as shown in the lowest stave:—



In some cases, the particular accents desired by the composer are indicated by the manner of grouping the notes (Ex. 60). In more than one instance, Schumann has adopted the unusual division of eight semiquavers into four groups, with a view to ensuring the proper distribution of the accent (Ex. 61*a*), and in the particular example quoted below, he has further emphasised his intention by the peculiar fingering which he has marked in certain bars (Ex. 61*b*):—





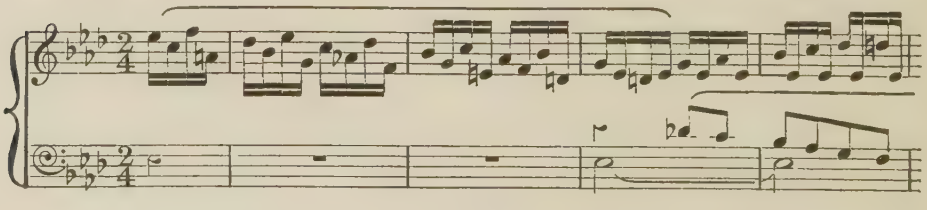
V.

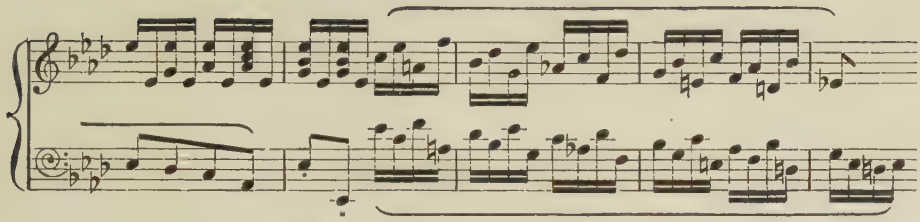
PHRASING.

In considering the various essentials of a satisfactory performance, as stated on page 2, it was remarked that attention must be paid to the connection or disconnection of the notes, and also to their relative degrees of force. Phrasing, which may fairly be defined as the difference between an interesting and an uninteresting or even unintelligible rendering, depends upon the due observance of these essential requirements. In the very fairly complete system of notation in present use, there are many signs by which the composer can express his wishes as to performance, and the proper rendering in respect of these signs is merely a matter of accuracy; but in addition, good phrasing requires a general comprehension of the character of the music, that its component parts may be kept in due proportion, and that the effect of the whole may be complete and convincing.

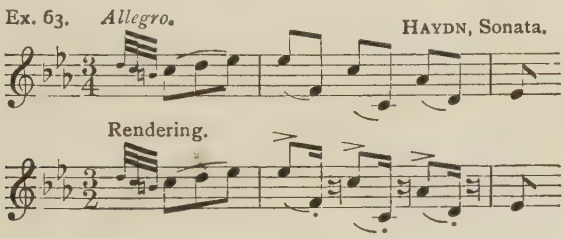
Of the signs relating to connection and disconnection, the one most frequently met with is a curved line drawn over a group of notes, commonly called a slur, and indicating connection. As generally used, it is not an indispensable sign, since all passages which are without any mark at all are understood to be *legato*, and therefore the addition of the curved line merely gives the phrase a more finished appearance. But in the works of certain composers the slur is occasionally employed in a manner which suggests that it is intended to possess a further significance, and to indicate a special variety of touch. In such cases, the passages which have no mark are meant to be played with great brilliancy, though of course without break of connection, while the slurred passages are to be rendered with a closer, quieter touch, and with very smooth effect. There can be no doubt that Beethoven intended this variety in the *Finale* of the Sonata in A flat, Op. 26, the diversity of the marking, as shown in the following example, being perfectly regular and constant throughout the movement:—

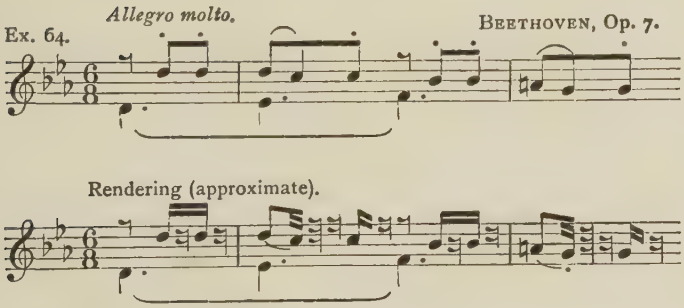
Ex. 62. *Allegro.* Beethoven, Op. 26





When the slur is applied to a group of two notes it receives a new significance, and produces one of the most important of all phrasing effects. The two notes are connected as a matter of course, but the first of the two is played with emphasis, more or less strong according to the character of the music, while the second is not only much weaker than the first, but also much shorter, being made in most cases as short as possible (Ex. 63). This curtailment of the second note, and its consequent disconnection from the note following, is especially noticeable when the group is completed by a *staccato* note or notes (Ex. 64). In such cases the second of the slurred notes must be made both shorter and weaker than the *staccato* note which follows it :—





All groups consisting of two slurred notes have their accent on the first, provided they are written either as notes of equal length (Ex. 65*a*) or else as a

longer note followed by a shorter (Ex. 65*b*), and this is the case even when their position contradicts the proper accent of the bar, as in Ex. 66:—

Ex. 65. *Allegro.* (*a*) BEETHOVEN, Op. 31, No. 2.

Rendering.

Assai vivace. (*b*) BEETHOVEN, Op. 106.

Rendering.

BEETHOVEN, Op. 27, No. 1

Ex. 66. *Allegro vivace.*

Rendering.

But when the slurring takes place from a shorter note to a longer, as in Ex. 67, the accent of the bar is not disturbed, and the second of the two slurred notes is emphasised. In all cases the second note is shortened, in order to separate the slurred group from whatsoever follows it, but a slight curtailment is generally sufficient in slurs which end with the longer note:—

Ex. 67. *Allegro.* SCHUMANN, Op. 32, No. 1.

sf

sf

The next example presents a series of slurs in which the accent has to be given to the *second* of two slurred notes, in spite of the fact that they are both written of equal value, thus appearing to form an exception to the rule. It must, however, be observed that the prevailing rhythm of such phrases differs from that of Ex. 66, in which the notes are not only of equal length, but follow at equal intervals of time; in the present case the melody really consists of short notes followed by long ones, slurred together, as will be seen on comparing with the plain form shown at *b* in the example, and the longer notes are written short merely to ensure a greater degree of curtailment than would have belonged to them if they had been written of their full length, as crotchets. Thus there is no real exception to the rule, the longer note of the rhythmical movement taking the accent, as in Ex. 67, although played extremely short:—

Ex. 68. *Presto.* (*a*) BEETHOVEN, Op. 31, No. 3.

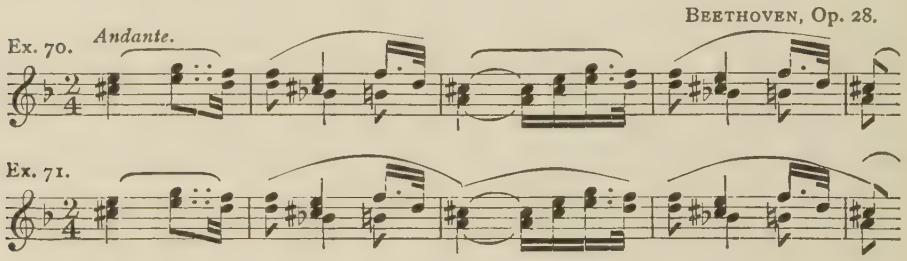
(*b*)

It sometimes happens that a composer desires that the second of two ordinary slurred notes shall be only *slightly* curtailed, so that there may be but little break of connection between this and the next following note. In this case the group is marked with an additional slur, covering the ordinary slur and the next note, thus:—

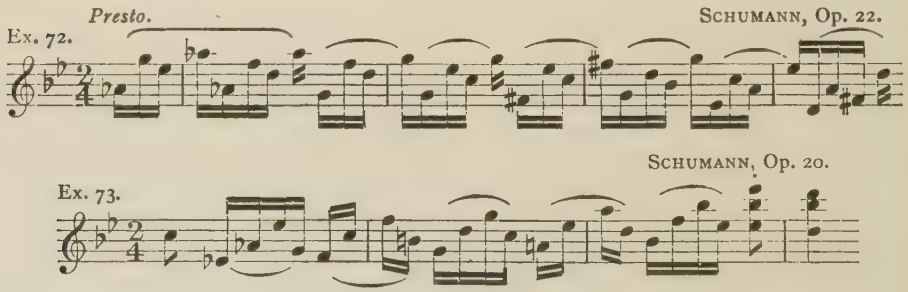
Ex. 69. BEETHOVEN, Op. 101.

When a slur is applied to two notes which are separated by so large an interval that actual connection is impossible, the effect of connection may be perfectly suggested by slightly exaggerating the amount of difference in the strength of the notes, playing the first with considerable pressure and the second with extreme lightness. If the right proportion is arrived at the ear may be completely deceived, and led to believe that the notes are actually connected mechanically; this is, in fact, an excellent instance of the value of variety of tone as a help to *legato*, already referred to on page 12. An example of a slur of this kind will be found in the subject of the *Finale* of Beethoven's Sonata in A, Op. 2, No. 2.

The slurring of a group of three or more notes does not imply any shortening of the final note, at least when the mark extends to and ends with the last note of a bar, or of one of the aliquot parts of a bar. Notwithstanding this rule, which almost every composer has followed in marking his works, modern editors, in their desire for completeness, have adopted a method of actually connecting the end of each slur with the beginning of the next, exactly as the notes are connected in performance. This over-carefulness, although it of course expresses nothing that is contrary to the proper phrasing, is much to be deprecated, for the reason that it leads anxious students to depend too much upon the marks, and too little on their own understanding of the character and phrasing of the music, and even induces them, when playing from an edition in which the composer's marks are preserved unaltered, to make a break of *legato* at the end of every slur, thus ruining the sense. It cannot therefore be too clearly understood, that the old-established mode of marking *legato*, as shown in Ex. 70, which was the accustomed manner of all the great composers, and the more elaborate method employed by so many modern editors, as in Ex. 71, mean exactly the same thing:—



Nevertheless, it is possible for a slur over a group of more than two notes to indicate an interruption of continuity. This occurs when the slur ends on an accented part of the bar (Ex. 72), or on the note immediately following (Ex. 73). In these cases, and in these alone, must the last note of the group included in the slur be made short:—



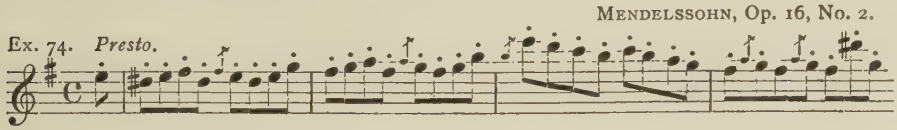
The disconnection of notes, an effect quite as important for good phrasing as their connection, is indicated either by the use of the word "*staccato*" or

by placing round dots or pointed dashes over the notes. But it must be observed that although these indications show that the notes are to be separated from each other, they do not determine the precise amount of separation, and by no means imply that they are to be as short as possible, unless the word *staccatissimo* is used. Originally, the dots and dashes were intended to signify a difference in the kind of *staccato* to be employed, the dash being used for the shortest possible notes, while the dots indicated a slightly more sustained manner of performance. This distinction was understood and observed by all the great teachers and composers of former times, and in particular by Beethoven, as is clear from certain letters of his, and from his own original markings, some interesting examples of which are given by Nottebohm in his "Beethoveniana" (p. 117 *et seq.*); but owing to the fact that modern editors of classical works generally have ignored the difference originally intended, and have either made use of one of the two signs throughout, or else of both indiscriminately, the marking is no longer trustworthy, and the choice of a suitable degree of *staccato* must depend on the judgment of the player, with reference to the general character of the phrase.

The first consideration which affects the question is the *tempo*, *staccato* notes in quick and lively passages being generally as short as possible (Ex. 74), while in slow movements they should be somewhat sustained, especially in phrases of a *cantabile* character (Ex. 75), where they should resemble as nearly as may be detached notes in vocal music, in which each note would be sung to a separate syllable, and would have a certain duration of vowel sound :—

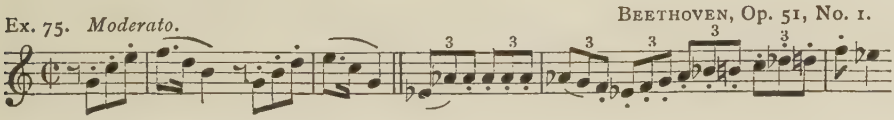
MENDELSSOHN, Op. 16, No. 2.

Ex. 74. *Presto.*



BEETHOVEN, Op. 51, No. 1.

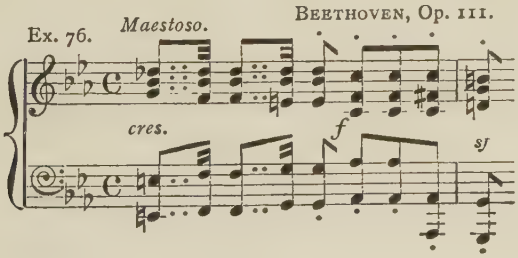
Ex. 75. *Moderato.*



An absolutely short *staccato* is nevertheless not impossible in slow *tempo*, but perhaps the only case in which it produces a good effect is in a phrase consisting of isolated chords of a forcible character, as in the following example :—

BEETHOVEN, Op. 111.

Ex. 76. *Maestoso.*



Differences in the written values of the notes must always be observed in *staccato* playing, although the exact proportion of the note-values need not be strictly adhered to. Thus, a phrase consisting of notes of different lengths, and marked *staccato*, such as Ex. 77, must be played with the longer notes only slightly curtailed, so as to preserve the characteristic variety, and not with all the notes equally short :—

Ex. 77. *Allegretto.* BEETHOVEN, Op. 22.

Rendering.

Incorrect Rendering.

On the pianoforte an excellent effect is sometimes obtained by a combination of sustained and *staccato* notes. Beethoven had a decided liking for this effect, and made frequent use of it, the most striking instance being, perhaps, the subject of the Sonata in G, Op. 31, quoted in Ex. 78. In performance, the object of the player is not to keep the two kinds of phrasing distinct from each other by way of contrast, but rather to combine them, and this is accomplished by playing the *staccato* note sharply, and with sufficient force to cause it to *intersect* the sustained sound, so to speak, and thus give it accent. Unless the *staccato* note be sufficiently strong this cannot be done, and the phrase will sound exactly as it appears on paper, but when the proportion of strength is properly adjusted the result nearly resembles that shown at *b* in the example, save that the effect is neater and more refined .—

Ex. 78. *Allegro vivace.* BEETHOVEN, Op. 31, No. 1.

a

b

The same combination is also frequently met with in slow *tempo*, where it is equally effective (Ex. 79), and it should be observed that although in appearance it resembles a syncopation, it is not one in reality, as the accent, which is supplied by the *staccato* note, is not anticipated, but falls on its proper place in the bar :—

BEETHOVEN, Op. 27, No. 1.

Ex. 79. *Adagio.*

fp

In passages of a certain construction, the dot or dash is sometimes employed, *not* for the purpose of shortening the notes, but as an indication that those notes to which the sign is applied are to be strongly marked, and made to stand out prominently from the rest. In such phrases the notes which are so marked form the melody, and they are separated from each other by intermediate notes which serve as accompaniment (Ex. 80). The peculiar use of the sign is justified by the fact that the notes of the melody, being separated by those of the accompaniment, are necessarily detached—*i.e.*, *staccato*—so far as regards their relation to each other, and the use of the dot or dash merely emphasises this fact. The proper rendering of such phrases is given in the example :—

Ex. 80. *So rasch wie möglich.* SCHUMANN, Op. 22.

sf

Rendering.

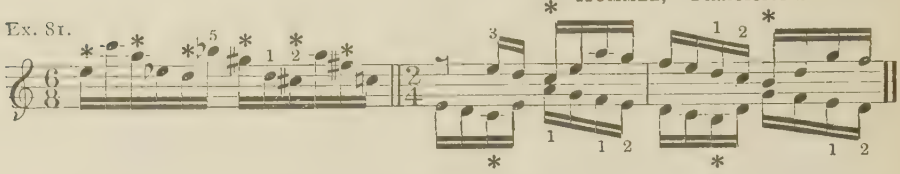
f p f p *f p f p* *sf p f p f p f p* *simile.*

Intended effect.

Besides *legato*, in which each note is sustained for its exact value, there is another manner of playing, known as *legatissimo*, which consists in sustaining

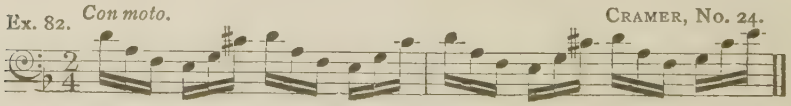
certain notes which belong to the harmony for more than their written length. This method, which was designed to produce greater richness of effect, was strongly inculcated by Hummel, who gives in his Pianoforte School a large number of exercises for its cultivation (Ex. 81), marking with an asterisk the notes which are to be sustained :—

Ex. 81. HUMMEL, "Pianoforte School."

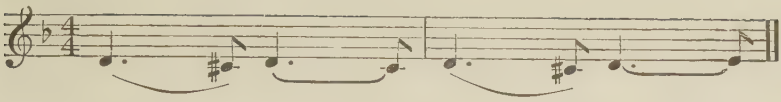


Modern music, depending for its effect upon brilliancy rather than sustained tone, seldom requires the *legatissimo* touch; besides, modern instruments possess a fuller and richer tone than those of the time of Hummel, and can better afford to dispense with sustained notes in passages. Nevertheless, the question of its application is of great interest, particularly as affecting the performance of Beethoven's works. Of all composers, Beethoven was perhaps the most scrupulously attentive to detail, not only in his marking of all the *nuances*, but especially with regard to the values of his notes, and on this account conscientious teachers and players have always objected to the smallest deviation from the text, as a wrong done to the intentions of the composer. The principle is undeniably sound, yet there are certain passages in the Sonatas which most players have felt would be more satisfactory in effect if played *legatissimo*. The question of the propriety of such a proceeding appears at length to have been decided by the recent publication of certain Studies by Cramer, selected and annotated by Beethoven for the use of his nephew. In his notes to these studies, after saying that he considers them the best preparation for the study of his own works, he gives directions for their proper performance, and among other things he insists on the employment of the *legatissimo* touch wherever its application is possible, his directions being practically the same as those of Hummel. Thus, in No. 24 of the Studies, he directs that the finger shall remain on the first note of the first triplet until the last note of the second triplet is played (Ex. 82), so that the melody (which he gives as in Ex. 83) may be made prominent. And referring to No. 5 (the commencement of which is given in Ex. 84), he says: "Even if it were written thus (as in Ex. 85), the first note of each group must nevertheless be held down," and so on in numerous other instances :—

Ex. 82. *Con moto.* CRAMER, No. 24.

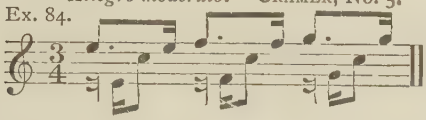


Ex. 83.

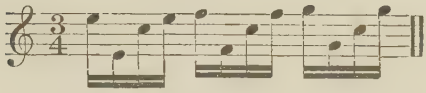


Allegro moderato. CRAMER, No. 5.

Ex. 84.



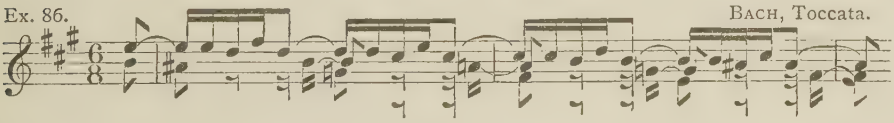
Ex. 85.



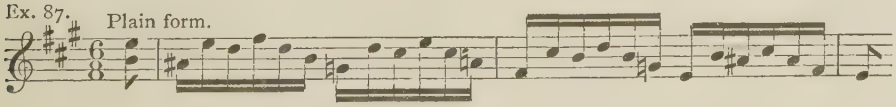
With these very clear indications before us of Beethoven's views as to the advantages of the *legatissimo* touch, it can scarcely be questioned that its employment is not only permissible, but even obligatory, in those portions of his Sonatas which seem to require it—for instance, in the subject of the *Finale* of Op. 26, in the second variation of the slow movement of Op. 57, and in other similar cases.

The employment of the *legatissimo* touch is of constant occurrence in the works of Bach, and it is obvious that the light, weak tone of the clavichord or the harpsichord (for the pianoforte had scarcely come in use in his day) would make it especially serviceable. Unlike Beethoven, however, Bach left nothing to the understanding of the player, but incorporated the desired effect in the text, by writing it out fully in notes of proper value. Thus the passage quoted in Ex. 86 is nothing more than a *legatissimo* rendering of the more simple form given in Ex. 87, and innumerable instances of the kind may be found throughout Bach's works, even in some of the fugues, where, of course, a more strict method of part-writing generally prevails. (See also p. 67):—

Ex. 86. BACH, Toccata.



Ex. 87. Plain form.



Among composers of later date, both Schumann and Chopin have made frequent use of the *legatissimo* manner. In Schumann's works such passages

are always written out in full, after Bach's method, as in the following example, in which the plain form is given underneath :—

Ex. 88. *Mässig.* SCHUMANN, Op. 17.

Plain form.

Chopin frequently did the same thing, as in the subject of the Mazurka in B flat minor (Ex. 89), but passages may also be found in his works in which, although they are written in notes of equal length, the *legatissimo* touch is possible and suitable, and editors of recent editions have in many cases suggested the effect by the addition of extra stems to certain of the notes, as in Ex. 90 :—

Ex. 89. *Moderato.* CHOPIN, Op. 24, No. 4.

Plain form.

Ex. 90. *Allegro maestoso.* CHOPIN, Op. 58.

pp

Klindworth's Edition.

Having so far considered what may be called the mechanical side of phrasing, as dealing with the means by which all its details and varieties may

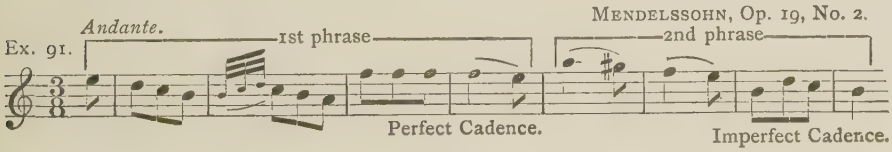
be accurately rendered, it now remains to speak of it in its more intellectual aspect, in which it has reference to the performance of a musical composition as a whole, and brings into operation the individual taste and judgment of the player. The very fact, however, of these faculties being called into requisition proves the impossibility of laying down any definite rules on the subject, and the utmost that can be done is to examine general principles, acquaintance with which is necessary in order that the student may be in a position to apply his judgment to special cases.

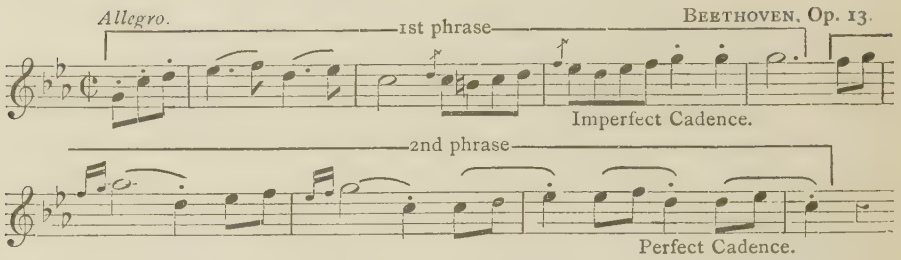
To be intelligible, music, like language, must be divided into sentences, some ending in such a manner as to produce a sense of finality, others, though complete in themselves, merely leading to the sentences which follow them. But whereas in written language the separation of the sentences is marked by stops, as a guide to the eye in reading, the musical sentences, or phrases as they are properly called, have no signs of punctuation, but owe their individuality to the harmonic progressions with which they end. These progressions are called cadences or closes, and are of three kinds—perfect, consisting of the dominant harmony followed by that of the tonic; imperfect, the reversal of the former progression, being the tonic harmony followed by the dominant; and interrupted, being the dominant harmony followed by some other chord than that of the tonic, and therefore unexpected. There is also a variety of the perfect cadence, called plagal (the ordinary form being known as authentic), in which the final tonic harmony is preceded by that of the subdominant, instead of the dominant; this cadence, however, occurs but seldom in modern music.

The perfect cadence has the effect of finality, and is analagous to the full stop in language, the other two correspond rather to the comma or semicolon, and produce a sense of incompleteness, which requires to be satisfied by something yet to follow. These effects are sufficiently definite to be easily recognised by the ear alone, even though the listener may have no knowledge, from the grammatical side, of the harmonic progressions which cause them, but they may be perverted or disguised by a negligent or eccentric performance, and it must, therefore, be the care of every player who aims at presenting the meaning of the composer in the clearest possible light, first to realise for himself the separate phrases into which the music is naturally divided, and then to render these phrases with such variety of emphasis and gradation of tone that the division may be understood and accepted by the listener.

In compositions of simple form, the phrases are usually of equal length throughout, each phrase containing four bars, and this may be considered the normal length of a phrase, as being by far the most frequent in use. The following are examples of the four-bar phrase :—

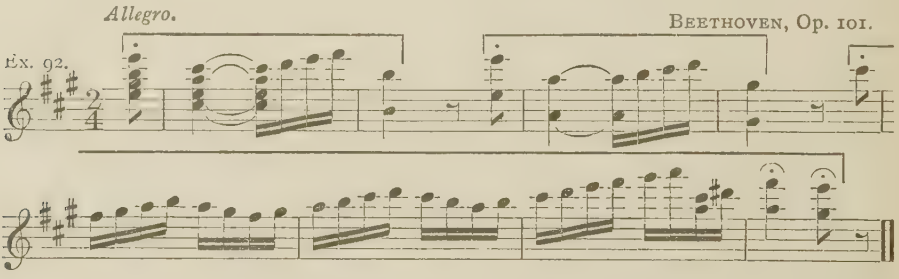
Ex. 91.



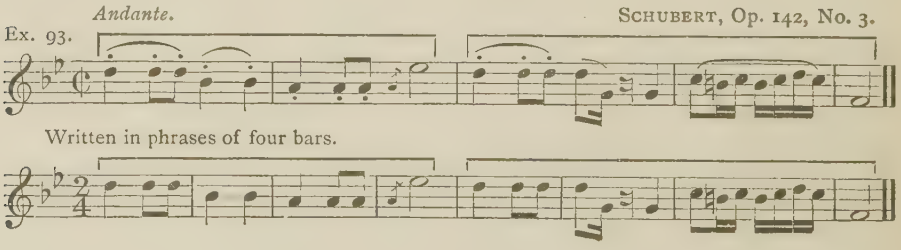


In analysing works of greater elaborateness, the length of the phrases may be found to vary considerably, but it is always best to begin by measuring them in quantities of four bars—first, because such varieties often prove to be merely modifications of the four-bar phrase, brought about by means of either extension or elision, and secondly, because true differences, if any, will show themselves most readily by comparison with the normal measure.

Thus, phrases of two bars may arise either from the division of a four-bar phrase into two halves, or from a manner of writing whereby a true four-bar phrase is expressed within the limits of two bars. In the first case, two phrases of two bars are usually followed by one of four, the prevailing effect being that of the division of the whole composition into regular phrases of four bars, the shorter phrases appearing at the two halves of a long one (Ex. 92). As additional examples of this arrangement, which is of very frequent occurrence, Schumann's Davidsbündler, Op. 6, No. 10, or Romance, Op. 28, No. 2, may be referred to:—



In the other case mentioned above, in which the four-bar phrase appears within the compass of two bars, the two halves of the bar are of such similar construction that the third beat might quite well serve as first beat—in other words, each bar might be written as two bars, which would convert the present two-bar phrase into a phrase of four (Ex. 93):—



In much the same way, phrases of eight bars are to be considered as four-bar phrases differently written, whenever, owing to melodic construction and accent, two of the written bars appear to the listener as one only (Ex. 94). Such discrepancies between the method of writing and the actual effect have already been noticed on page 33:—

Ex. 94. *Aeusserst lebhaft.* SCHUMANN, Op. 12, No. 7.

pp

Written as a phrase of four bars.

True phrases of two or eight bars—that is to say, phrases which do not sound like four-bar phrases—are very rare, though they are met with occasionally. The real two-bar phrase is naturally best in slow *tempo*. Examples are given below:—

Ex. 95. Phrases of two bars. BEETHOVEN, Op. 37.

Largo.

Allegretto. SCHUBERT, Op. 90, No. 4.

Phrase of eight bars.

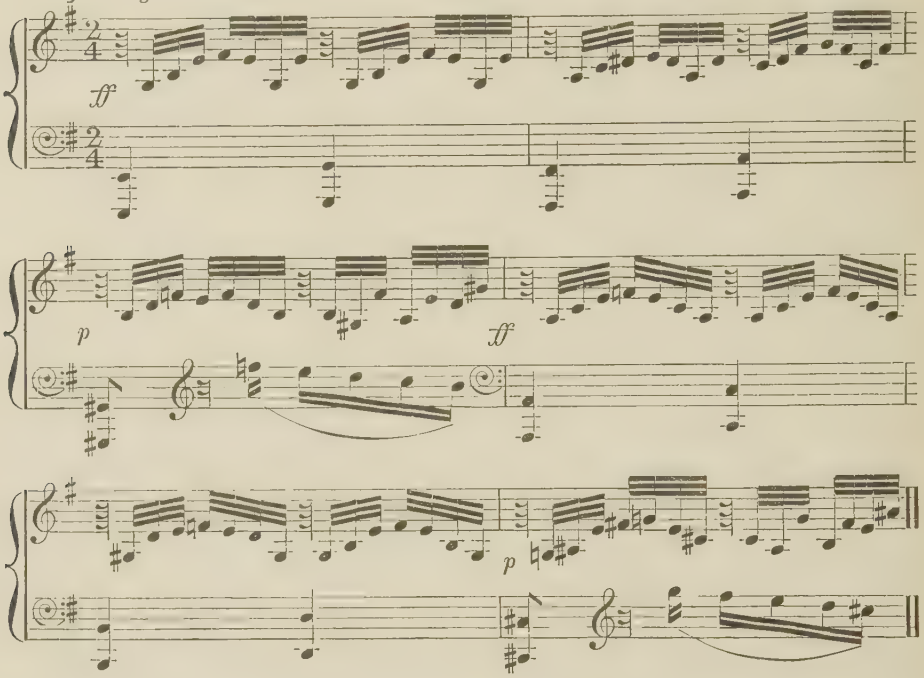
Allegretto. BEETHOVEN, Op. 31, No. 2.

f *sf* *dim.* *p*

Phrases of three bars are more often met with in combination with other phrases than independently, though there are excellent examples of the true three-bar phrase, as in Ex. 96. A compound phrase of eight bars may be made up of a phrase of three bars followed by one of five (Ex. 97), or a two-bar phrase followed by one of three bars may make up a five-bar phrase (Ex. 98), while in one instance at least (the only one with which the writer is acquainted)

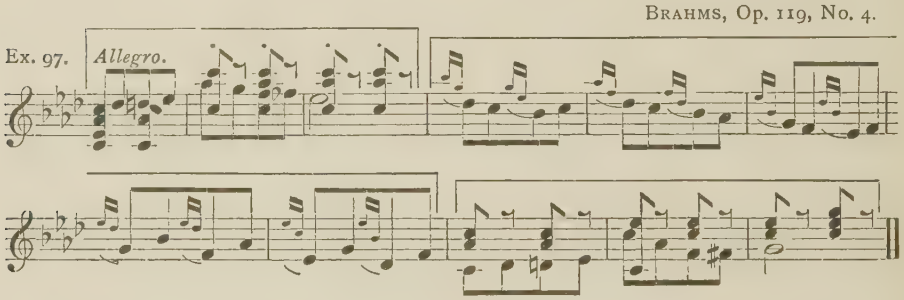
a phrase of four bars and one of three go to make up the unusual phrase-length of seven bars (Ex. 99) :—

Ex. 96. *Adagio.* BEETHOVEN, Op. 2, No. 3.

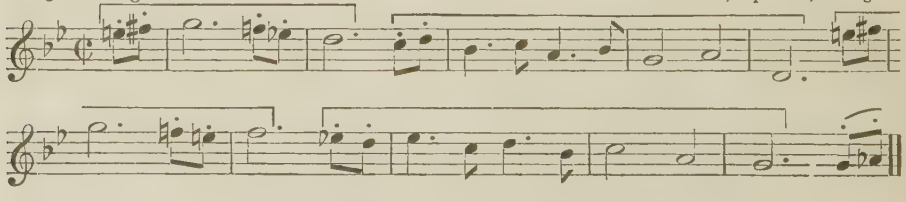


BRAHMS, Op. 119, No. 4.

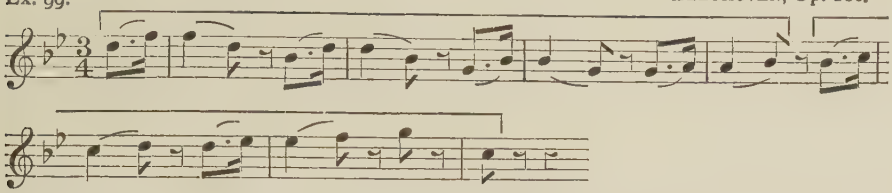
Ex. 97. *Allegro.*



Ex. 98. *Allegro.* BRAHMS, Op. 118, No. 3.

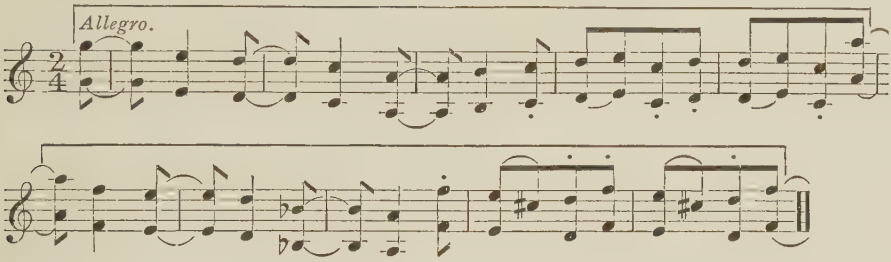


Ex. 99. *Assai vivace.* BEETHOVEN, Op. 106.

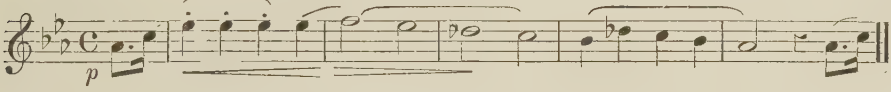


A phrase of five bars may be formed by the addition of one bar to a four-bar phrase, the added bar being a partial or complete repetition of the last bar of the four-bar phrase (Ex. 100). But we also meet with the true five-bar phrase, in which there is no such repetition, though not frequently (Ex. 101):—

Ex. 100. SCHUBERT, Drei Klavierstücke, No. 3.



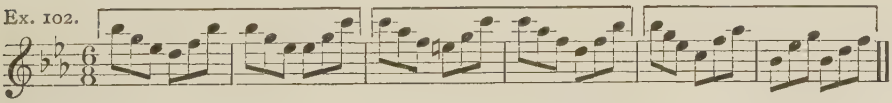
Ex. 101. *Allegro molto moderato.* SCHUBERT, Op. 90, No. 1.



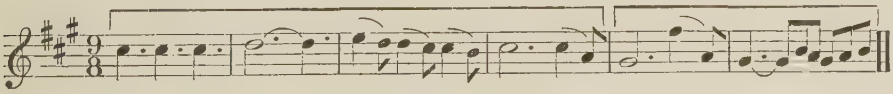
The phrase of six bars is always a compound phrase, being made up of three short phrases of two bars each (Ex. 102), or of two and four, or, more frequently, of four and two bars (Ex. 103):—

Vivacissimamento. BEETHOVEN, Op. 81*a*.

Ex. 102.



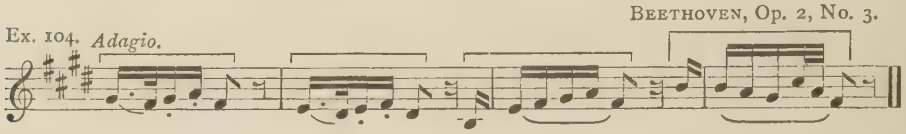
Ex. 103. *Andantino.* SCHUBERT, Op. 94, No. 2.



In one instance only, so far as the writer is aware, is the phrase short enough to be contained within the limits of a single bar. This is in the *Adagio*

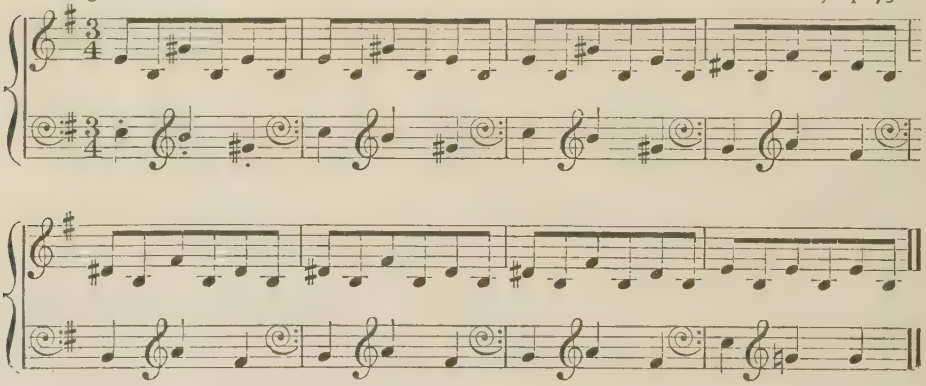
of the Sonata by Beethoven, Op. 2, No. 3 (Ex. 104). The phrases are all complete, ending with their respective cadences, and there is no second accent in the bar to justify us in considering it as a phrase of two bars written in one. Other cases there are in which a single bar *appears* to contain a complete phrase, as in the Introduction to the Sonata in C minor, Op. 13, but in all these instances the third beat of the bar is of equal importance with the first, or nearly so, and the effect is really that of a two-bar phrase :—

Ex. 104. *Adagio.* BEETHOVEN, Op. 2, No. 3.

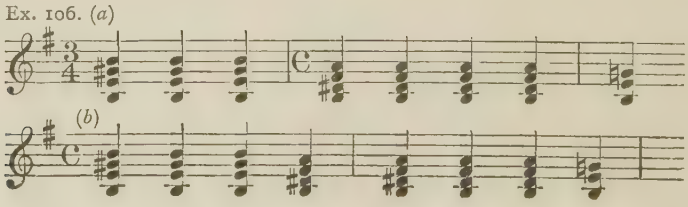


Besides facilitating the recognition of the varieties of phrase-lengths just described, the advantage of measuring everything by the standard of four bars shows itself very decidedly in certain cases, in which, without its assistance, the phrasing might be entirely misunderstood. Example 105 is a case in point; at the first glance the change of harmony in the fourth bar might lead one to imagine a phrase of three bars followed by one of five, but the application of the four-bar standard proves at once that the true reading is that of successive phrases of four bars each. The difference between the two readings is made clear by writing the passage in unbroken chords, barred as in Ex. 106, *a* and *b*, the correct version being of course that shown at *b* :—

Ex. 105. BEETHOVEN, Op. 79.



Ex. 106. (*a*)

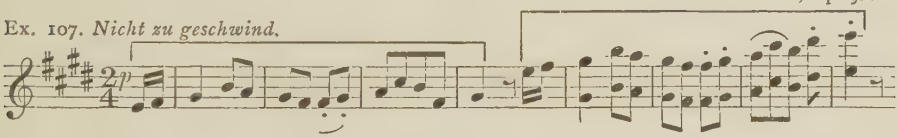


Phrases of this kind are by no means uncommon, a notable example being the *Finale* of Beethoven's Sonata in D minor, Op. 31, No. 2.

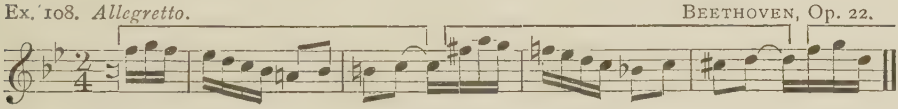
In the rendering of all phrases, whatsoever their length, the object of the player must be to enable the listener to distinguish between the end of one phrase and the beginning of the next, and so to recognise their independent existence. The amount of difficulty experienced in achieving this depends on the construction of the music, some phrases being already separated from the next following by means of rests, as in Ex. 107, while others follow consecutively without break, as in Ex. 108, in which latter case the separation will depend on properly varying the force of tone. Certain general principles may be observed, but any rules on the subject must be liable to frequent exception:—

BEETHOVEN, Op. 90.

Ex. 107. *Nicht zu geschwind.*



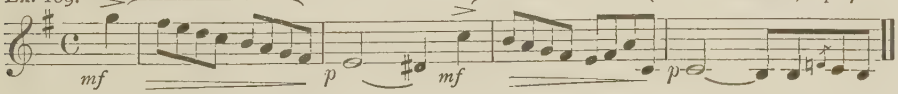
Ex. 108. *Allegretto.* BEETHOVEN, Op. 22.



Many phrases, perhaps most, begin with moderate strength, increase in force towards the middle, and diminish to the end, which is always made weaker than the beginning. This manner of phrasing is suitable in Examples 101, 102, 103, and in innumerable similar instances.

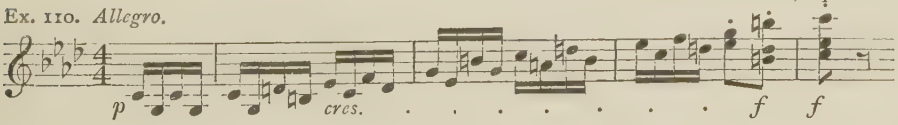
Descending phrases of any considerable extent begin more or less forcibly and diminish throughout, as in Ex. 109, and phrases which ascend continuously may begin gently and increase even to the final note, as in Ex. 110:—

Ex. 109. *Moderato.* WEBER, Op. 70.



BEETHOVEN, Op. 26.

Ex. 110. *Allegro.*



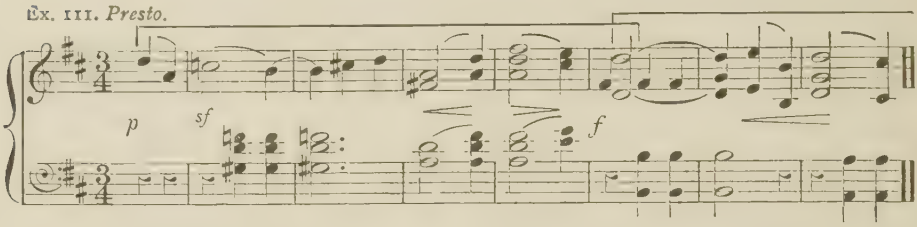
With the exception, then, of such phrases as the one last quoted, which are not of frequent occurrence, the rule is that the close of a phrase is its weakest part, and the observation of this rule is of great importance to the rendering of such phrases as Ex. 105. For if this passage were misread, the third bar, as ending a phrase, would be played weak, and the fourth bar stronger, whereas

in the proper reading it is the *fourth* bar which is weakest, and the fifth, as the beginning of a new phrase, which receives an accession of strength.

Phrases sometimes overlap each other, the end of one phrase being merged in the beginning of the next (Ex. 111). In such cases the beginning of the new phrase is somewhat abruptly strengthened, in order to cover, as it were, the weakened close of the preceding :—

MENDELSSOHN, Op. 40.

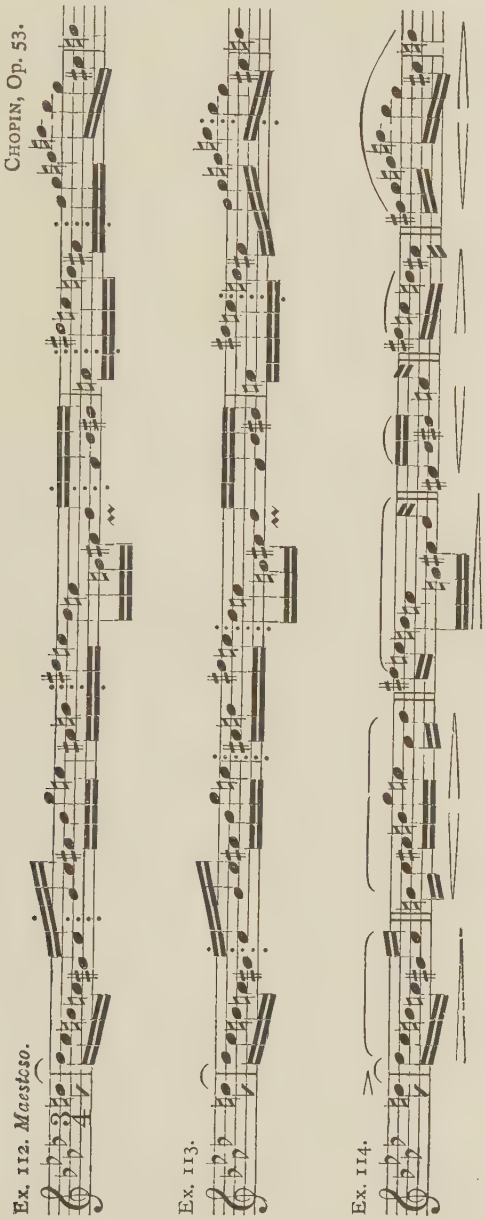
Ex. 111. *Presto.*



The phrasing of rapid passages depends to some extent on their construction. Passages which are simply brilliant, such as those in Chopin's Studies, Op. 10, Nos. 4 and 8, and Op. 25, No. 12, as likewise most of Mendelssohn's passages, require but little variety beyond the necessary accent and general light and shade, and the phrasing follows the harmonies by which they are accompanied, or, if unaccompanied, serves to make clear the harmonies which they represent. There are however passages, generally of moderate speed, which have a far more melodic character, and may be considered as rapid melodies, or melodious passages. Their construction is more complex than that of ordinary harmonic passages such as those just referred to, and they contain numerous passing-notes and auxiliary notes interspersed among their scales or broken chords. Passages of this kind, which are of frequent occurrence in Chopin's works, require to be phrased in much the same manner as *cantabile* melodies, save that the portions into which they have to be divided are much shorter than real phrases, and are for the most part of very irregular length. It will not be possible here to do more than suggest the course which should be pursued with regard to such melodic passages, since the mode of procedure is less subject to rule than any other kind of phrasing, and depends more on the individual taste of the player.

If, then, we examine closely such a passage as Ex. 112, we find that it is capable of being divided into small portions, each one having a certain musical sense of its own, though necessarily of a fragmentary kind. In the example, the suggested divisions are marked by vertical dotted lines. It does not follow that these are the only possible divisions, but, at any rate, they present intelligible fragments, which would not have been the case if the passage had been divided, say, as in Ex. 113. Now, if the phrasing of each fragment is studied *separately*, just as the long phrases of a *cantabile* melody are studied, due attention being paid to its rise and fall, to the stronger commencements of the fragments in most cases, and so on, the result will be more or less as roughly

indicated in Ex. 114, and when the fragments are afterwards combined into one unbroken whole, the passage will be played far more interestingly and with more life and variety than would have been possible, or even imaginable, if merely the rhythmical accents of the bar had been observed :—

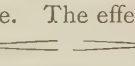


VI.

EXPRESSION.

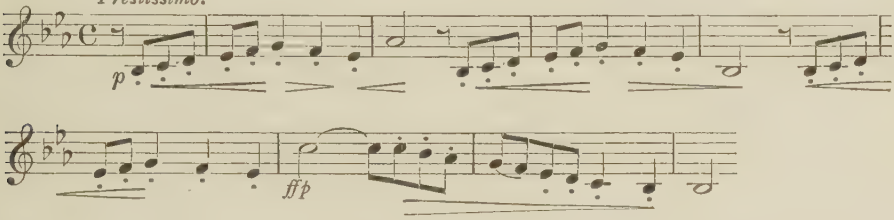
The term Expression, as usually applied to musical performance, appears to be unnecessarily limited in significance. If we hear of an expressive movement or phrase, the idea suggested to the mind is that of something slow and quiet, perhaps graceful, perhaps serious in character, but never passionate or energetic. But surely more than one or two kinds of emotion can be expressed in music, and the term "expressive" seems as appropriate to a composition such as the first movement of Schumann's Fantasia, Op. 17, as it is to a Song without Words by Mendelssohn. In its fullest sense, expression may be taken to mean the power of conveying to the listener the emotions which the music has awakened in the performer, and the pianist who plays most expressively is he who is most deeply impressed by the music he plays, always provided he has at command the means of expressing his feelings adequately. Expression in music may thus be likened to the art of the painter, whose aim it is to bring before the eye of the beholder a landscape or a portrait *as he sees it*, and the landscape need not necessarily be a simple pastoral scene, or the portrait wear a happy and peaceful expression.

It is evident that the faculty of receiving impressions from a musical composition, and of perceiving the emotional qualities which are inherent in it, cannot be taught or learned; it is intuitive, though capable of development through study and experience. But the *means* of expressing such impressions in audible sound are the same for all, from the most gifted pianist to the least, and these means, forming what may be called the *technique* of expression, must be the subject for present consideration.

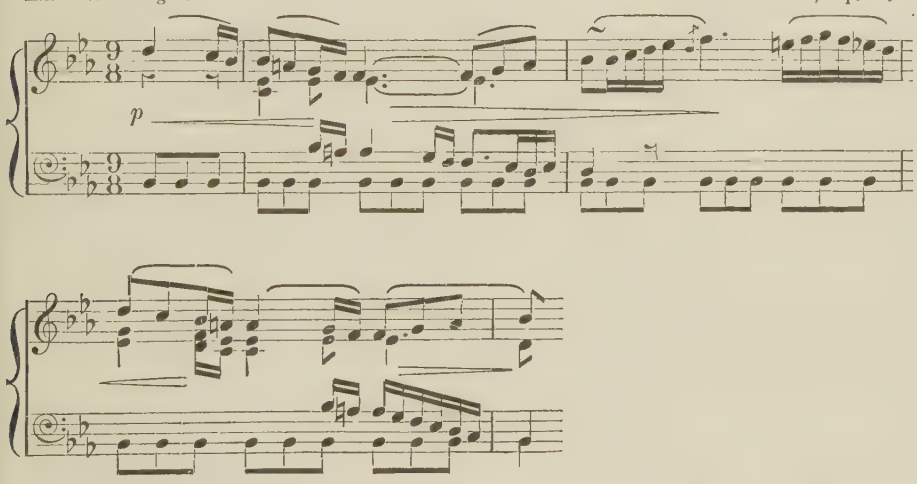
Speaking generally, expression depends chiefly on variety of tone, whether it be of notes in succession, as in phrases played *crescendo* or *diminuendo*, or of notes in combination, as in a chord where one note is made prominent above the rest. The amount of variety in the first case may vary considerably, according to the effect desired, but whether the increase or decrease of force is gradual, as is generally the case in long passages, or more abrupt, as in short phrases which require the transition from soft to loud (or *vice versâ*) to be effected in the course of but few notes, the important point is that the change shall be proportional, each note receiving exactly its due share of increase or decrease. The effect of *crescendo* or *diminuendo* is graphically expressed by its sign  , the lines of which recede from or approach each other in perfect proportion, and the distortion of any *crescendo* passage in which proportion is not kept would be quite as perceptible to the ear as that of an

irregular sign would be to the eye. As a rule, passages which ascend are played *crescendo*, and descending passages *diminuendo*, and there can be no doubt that this is the proper treatment in the great majority of cases (Ex. 115). Still, the rule is not invariable, and phrases may be found which gain in distinction from being treated in the opposite manner, possibly on account of the ordinary treatment being so usual as to pass almost unnoticed. The fact may be proved by playing the phrases quoted in Ex. 116, first with the variety indicated in the example, and afterwards in the opposite and customary way :—

Ex. 115. *Prestissimo.* BEETHOVEN, Op. 10, No. 1.



Ex. 116. *Adagio.* BEETHOVEN, Op. 22.



Another exceptional and beautiful effect of variety, and one much affected by Beethoven, occurs when a *crescendo* phrase passes suddenly into a *piano*, instead of culminating, as might be expected, in a *forte* or *fortissimo* (Ex. 117). The full effect of the change is sometimes marred by an endeavour on the part of the player to minimise the abruptness by weakening the final notes of the *crescendo;* this is an error of judgment, such changes are always clearly

marked by the composer, and should be frankly accepted and fully carried out by the player :—

Ex. 117. BEETHOVEN, Op. 28.

Andante. *p* *cresc.* *p*

It is a weakness of the pianoforte as a musical instrument, that it is unable to sustain a sound without diminution of strength, and it is necessary to take this weakness into account in the playing of *legato* phrases in which long notes occur interspersed with short ones. In such cases the long notes require to be played with a certain degree of force, in order that they may have sufficient sustaining power to enable them to connect properly with the next following note. For instance, if the long notes in Ex. 118*a* were not played with more firmness than is required by the short ones, they would probably diminish so much as to become practically extinct by the time at which they have to connect with the continuance of the passage, and there would be a danger of the general effect of the phrase appearing to the listener as at *b* in the example :—

Ex. 118. CHOPIN, Op. 62, No. 2.

(*a*) *Lento.* *sostenuto.*

(*b*)

It must not be inferred, however, that the phrasing would be in any way injured by the necessity just spoken of. Composers who write for the pianoforte do so with a full knowledge of its capabilities and restrictions, and long sustained notes would be written only in places where the greater degree of force would be an advantage, and not the contrary. It is only in pianoforte arrangements of music intended for voices, or for other instruments, that the rendering in question might possibly be adverse to the proper effect.

If we have just referred to one of the weaknesses of the pianoforte, we may now proceed to consider one of its greatest advantages, perhaps its chief advantage—namely, its capacity for producing more than one sound at a time.

This it is which makes the pianoforte pre-eminently a solo instrument, which enables it, unassisted, to render both melody and accompaniment, and even to bring out with perfect accuracy and distinctness the movement of several parts or voices at the same time, as in fugues and other works of polyphonic character. Only the organ can compare with the pianoforte in these respects, and the latter has at least one important advantage over its rival, for it can produce two sounds of different strength at the same moment, and can, therefore, render two parts at once, one of which shall be prominent and the other subordinate. In pianoforte playing, the relation in point of strength of one part to the parts above or below it is termed "balance of tone," and there is no subject of study more important for the cultivation of an expressive style of playing; indeed, the student's attention can scarcely be directed to it too early.

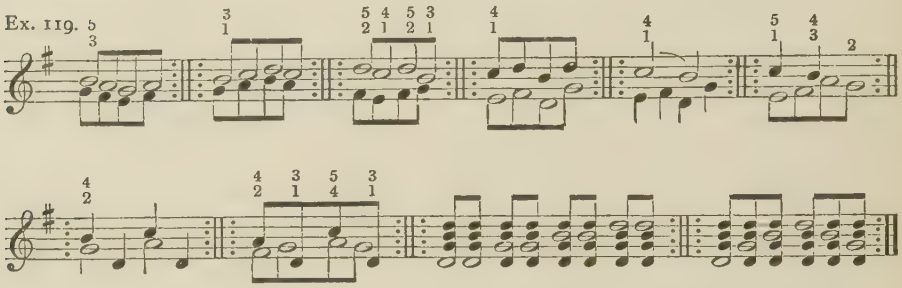
The simplest conditions necessitating the observance of balance of tone occur when the right hand plays a melody and the left hand the accompaniment. As the right hand is naturally stronger than the left, there is no great difficulty in making the melody sufficiently prominent, though care and judgment must be exercised, that the amount of the difference between the two parts shall be suitable to the character of the music. But the difficulty is increased when it is a question of rendering three parts—melody, bass, and inner accompaniment. In such a combination the melody must be strongest, the bass coming next in order of strength, and the accompaniment must be the weakest part. Two of the parts must necessarily be played by one hand, in the majority of cases by the right hand (though the left hand may likewise be required to undertake this duty), and it therefore becomes necessary to acquire the power of striking two notes with one hand and at the same moment, the strength of one of the notes being decidedly in excess.

It is not easy to describe in writing the exact way in which this is to be accomplished. Of course, the strength of the tone depends upon the speed of the blow and the amount of pressure combined, but if one of the two fingers engaged were to move decidedly quicker than the other, it would be the first to depress its key, and the two sounds would not be produced simultaneously, the weaker sound would follow the other. There is no doubt, however, that the finger which produces the stronger tone *does* move a very little quicker than the other, but so little that it has just time to give the requisite amount of pressure at the precise moment at which the weaker finger arrives at the depth of its key without any pressure whatsoever. Such minute differences cannot be calculated; it is a question of sense of touch, which can be cultivated and developed in this direction to a surprising extent, given the necessary perseverance and attention.

It may be of benefit to suggest here certain forms of exercise by which the necessary control over the fingers may be acquired, it being observed that such exercises may be multiplied and amplified to any extent, and always repay the labour bestowed on them. In practising them it must be observed that it is far easier to play two notes of dissimilar strength one after the other than both together, and that there is consequently a temptation to spread the notes, in

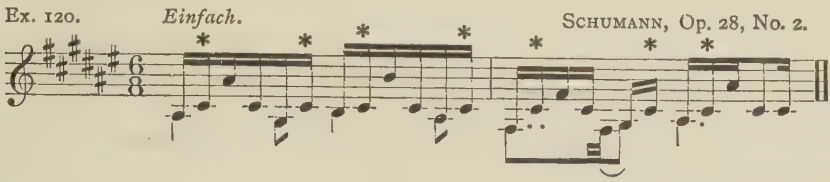
the manner of arpeggio; this tendency must, of course, be carefully guarded against. In the examples, the notes with open heads are to be made strong and the black notes weak, and the open notes with quaver stems are to be played of the value of quavers only:—

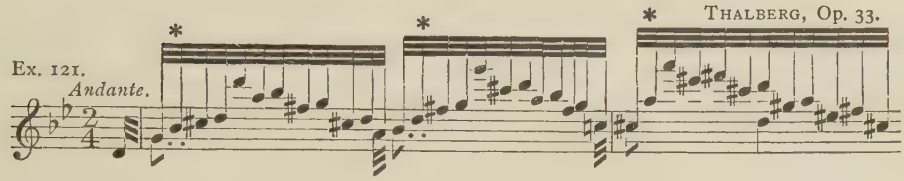
Ex. 119.



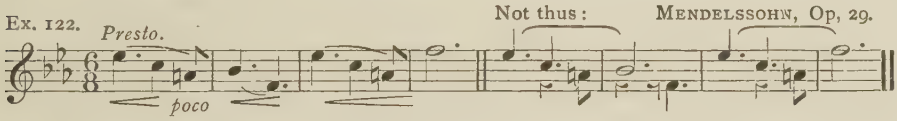
Since the whole sense and purport of music lies in the melody, the accompaniment being what its name implies, an attendant on the melody, and therefore subordinate, it follows that the accompaniment ought always to be weaker than the melody. In music for two different instruments, such as pianoforte and violin, the listener is enabled to distinguish between melody and accompaniment by the differing qualities of tone, irrespective of their strength, but in pianoforte music, where only one tone-quality is present, the distinction between the two can only be made clear by means of difference in *strength*, which difference should therefore be very considerable. This is especially necessary when the melody lies below the accompaniment, and also when the notes of a melody are long, and each note is accompanied by a large number of notes in rapid movement. When a melody lies lower than the accompaniment (Ex. 120), it is in some danger of being missed by the listener, because the ear is so accustomed to find the melody in the highest part that it is apt to seek for it there always, and to imagine that the upper notes, or some of them, belong to it, unless the attention is kept in the right place by the real melody being made to assert itself sufficiently. When there are many notes of accompaniment between the melody-notes, as in Ex. 121, there is still greater danger of the sense being lost, as the listener's attention is readily distracted by the rapid movement, and follows it too closely, and so loses hold of the sequence of the melody. To prevent this it is necessary that the note which follows immediately after any note of the melody should be made very weak—in fact, only just audible. This creates a slight break, not of mechanical connection, but of effect, which enables the hearer to distinguish between melody and accompaniment, and to follow the succession of the former without difficulty, even though the intervening passage (with the exception of the one weak note) may be positively

brilliant. In the examples, the notes which are to be specially weakened are marked with an asterisk :—

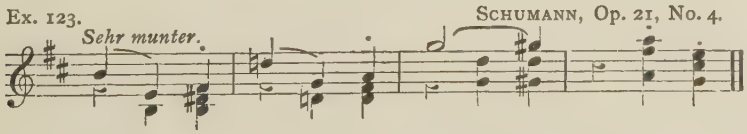




We have seen that there is sometimes a danger of accompaniment being mistaken for melody, and there may also be a danger of melody being accepted as accompaniment. This happens when a descending melodic progression employs two or more of the notes of the chord by which it is accompanied, as in Ex. 122. In all such cases the descending notes must be played firmly, even increasing slightly as they descend, lest the listener should make the very natural mistake of considering the highest note alone as melody-note, and the following notes as accompaniment :—



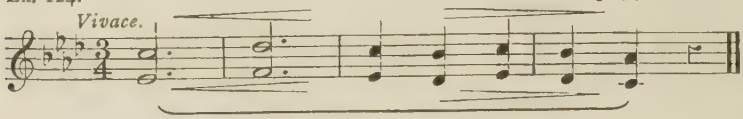
The importance of this method of treatment is very noticeable in Schumann's Novelette, No. 4, quoted below (Ex. 123). Here are bars of similar construction, but different meaning, and the only way of conveying this difference to the listener, and of proving to him that bars one and two have a melody of three crotchets, while that of bar three consists of two notes only, minim and crotchet, is to give sufficient tone to the lower notes of the falling melody in bars one and two :—



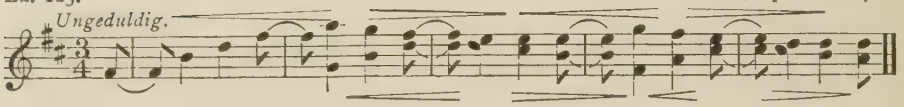
In double melody, in which the effect sought is that of a duet of voices, the two parts may move in similar motion and with the same rhythm, in which case

the expression, as regards increase or diminution of force, will be the same for both (Ex. 124), or the movement may be in opposite directions, and so require two contrary effects of gradation at the same moment (Ex. 125):—

Ex. 124. CHOPIN, Op. 34, No. 1.

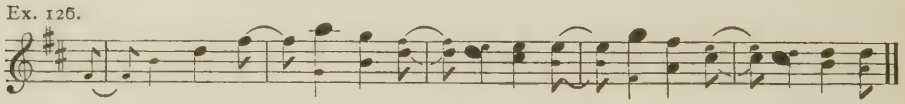


Ex. 125. SCHUMANN, Op. 6, No. 4.



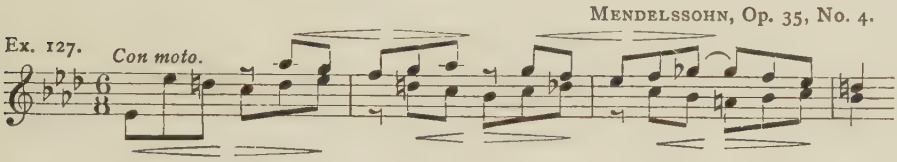
It is in such phrases as that just described that the importance of perfect control over balance of tone is made manifest. For it is not sufficient to realise the expression of each part separately, although this should always be the first step, but in addition to this, the relation of each note of the upper melody to the note below it, in respect of strength of tone, must receive full consideration. For instance, in the above example (Ex. 125), the A of the upper melody, at the moment at which the lower melody joins it, must be decidedly stronger than the G below it; at the next crotchet the upper part will have diminished and the lower increased, so that both notes are of equal strength; at the end of the bar the upper note must be yet weaker, and the lower one perhaps a little stronger, to increase still more on the following crotchet, where the two parts will bear to each other exactly the opposite relation to that with which they began. We may attempt to make this complex relationship visible, of course roughly and only approximately, by the varying size of the note-heads in the following example:—

Ex. 126.

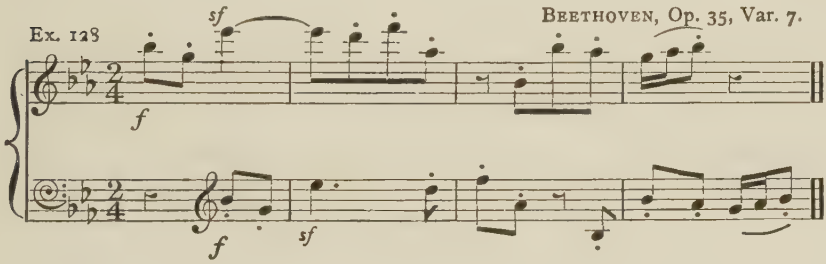


Similar difficulties with regard to balance of tone are met with when the two parts move in strict imitation, as in a Canon. There the same expression is of course required for both parts, since the second is merely an imitation of the first, but owing to the fact that the second part follows the first after a certain interval of time, the same effect is never required in both parts at the same moment, and an accurate adjustment of the relative strength of the two parts is therefore necessary throughout, in order to preserve the correctness

of the imitation. Ex. 127 is a sample of this kind of writing, and possesses the peculiarity that the accent occurs in the middle of the phrase, and that therefore the descending portion of the phrase is *crescendo* and the ascending *diminuendo*, contrary to the usual rule:—



In canon-playing, the leading part should always contain some decided and characteristic effects, such as *sforzando*, occasional *staccato*, and so on, which may be easily recognised by the listener when they recur in their proper place in the second part. Such points of effect are generally marked by the composer, as in the following example, but even in the absence of marks they should be supplied by the player, as otherwise the general effect would be lifeless and the imitation vague and uncertain, and the hearer might even fail to perceive that he was listening to a canon at all:—



In the above examples, the two combined melodies are of equal importance and require the same expression. But there are also combinations of a principal melody with a subordinate one, although the latter is essentially a melody, and not merely an accompaniment. Thus, in Ex. 129, the chief melody lies in the left hand, while the right hand executes a perfect but subordinate melody, together with an extremely delicate accompaniment. In such cases, each melody must receive its own characteristic expression, the prominence of the chief melody being preserved throughout, and the necessity for this considerably increases the difficulty of balance of tone. But it is a difficulty of listening critically rather than of execution, and it is therefore best to commence the study of such passages by playing repeatedly each melody separately, with every care as to expression, until the ear has become

thoroughly acquainted with every variety of tone of which they are capable, before putting them together :—

Ex. 129. *Lento.* *pp* CHOPIN, Op. 25, No. 7.

Similar treatment is required for what may be termed melodic accompaniment, when the part which accompanies a melody is melodic in construction, instead of being purely harmonic (Ex. 130). This kind of accompaniment resembles an *obbligato* part for some instrument accompanying the voice :—

Ex. 130. *Allegro con moto.* MENDELSSOHN, Op. 28.

p

Innumerable examples of melodic accompaniment are to be found in the works of most pianoforte composers, but especially perhaps in those of Chopin, whose simplest accompaniments are full of delicate suggestions of melody, which must by no means be neglected by the player, even though they may not be sufficiently defined to produce the effect of an *obbligato* accompaniment. The following is a beautiful example of the melodious character of Chopin's simpler accompaniments :—

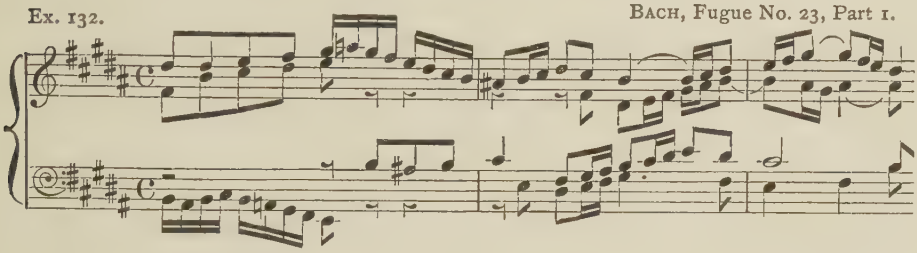
Ex. 131. *Lento (più lento).* CHOPIN, Op. 28, No. 13.

p sostenuto.

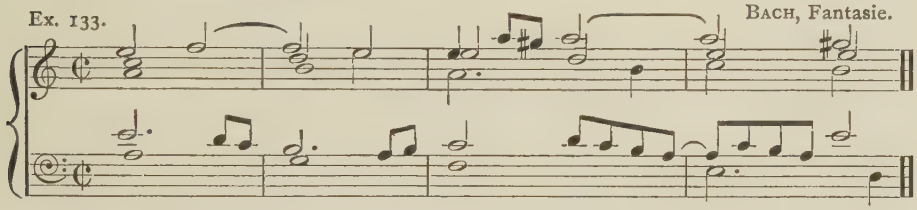
etc.

Balance of tone is of course essential to good part-playing—that is to say, to the playing of music written in real parts. In the notation of music of this description, any two parts written on the same stave will have their stems turned in opposite directions, so that if the passage is in four parts there will be two, with their stems turned respectively upwards and downwards, on each stave (Ex. 132). Each of the parts is complete in itself as regards time, the bar being made up with rests in the case of one part becoming silent for a time, and the object of writing the stems in opposite directions is to enable the eye to distinguish readily between any two parts which are placed on the same stave. Of course, when there are more than four parts, the stems of at least two must necessarily turn in the same direction (Ex. 133):—

Ex. 132. BACH, Fugue No. 23, Part 1.



Ex. 133. BACH, Fantasie.



In part-playing, one of the parts is most commonly of greater thematic importance than the others, and must be made prominent accordingly. Thus in Ex. 132 above, the subject of the fugue enters in the tenor, at the end of the first bar, and continues in that part to the end of the example; the notes of this part must therefore be played with much fuller tone than those of the parts by which it is accompanied.

The notation of *legatissimo*, already described on page 47, bears a close resemblance to that of part-writing, but the effect intended is totally different, the object of part-writing (and part-playing) being to present a combination of *several* melodies, while that of *legatissimo* is to suggest a *single* melody passing through several parts. To distinguish between the two in reading, it is only necessary to play each part separately. If it is a piece of real part-writing, such as Ex. 132, each part will possess an intelligible and unbroken melody of its own, while if the melody of each separate part is found to be fragmentary and vague, it is a proof that the phrase is intended to be *legatissimo*, the intelligible melody arising from the combination of the parts. Ex. 134 is an instance of this kind of writing. The three upper parts, taken separately, appear as at B, C, and D, and are almost meaningless, while in combination

they form the melody shown at E, which is, of course, the true melody of the phrase :—

Ex. 134. A. BACH, Suite Anglaise, No. 6.

B. C.

D. E.

Naturally, the difference between part-playing and *legatissimo* playing must correspond with the difference in the intended effect ; in *legatissimo*, all the notes which compose the melody must be of equal, or nearly equal, strength (allowing, of course, for expressive gradation of tone as may be required), while in true part-playing the melody of one part will be predominant over that of another, in proportion as it is thematically more important, that the independence and individuality of the parts may be preserved.

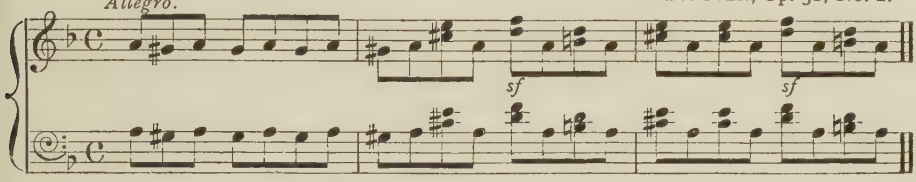
When two parts move together in unaccompanied unison, whether as a melody (Ex. 135) or a passage (Ex. 136), a richer and more musical quality of tone is secured by making the lower part a trifle stronger than the upper. The same thing is observable in combining the various registers of the organ, where the volume of tone produced by the stops of 8-feet pitch must always be in excess of that of the 4-feet stops used in combination with them, as otherwise the tone would be unpleasantly shrill :—

Ex. 135. *Moderato.* SCHUBERT, Op. 42.

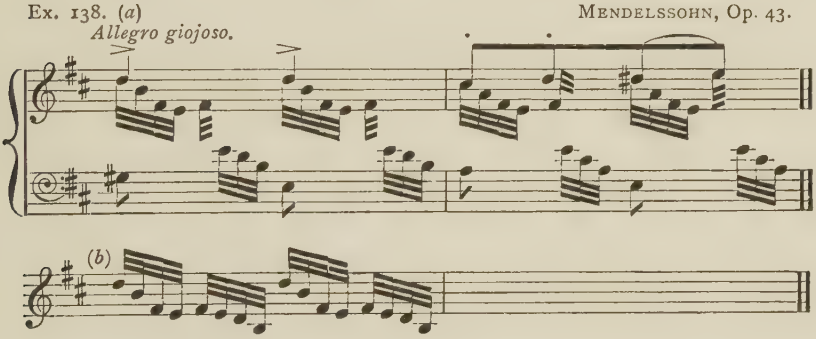
Ex. 136. *Molto allegro.* *8va* MENDELSSOHN, Op. 25.

In the various illustrations of balance of tone which have been adduced so far, a difference in strength of tone has always been implied, either between the two hands or between two parts played by the same hand; there are, however, occasions when it is important that the two hands should play with exactly equal power, a condition which, though very simple, is perhaps not more easy to realise than any of the differences described above. We find two principal cases in which this necessity is perceived: one, when the parts played by the two hands are similar in sense and character, and so require similar variety of expression, not, as in canon-playing, following one another, but simultaneously (Ex. 137); and the other, when a single part—generally an accompaniment—is divided between the two hands employed alternately (Ex. 138*a*). In this last case, the aim of the player must be to conceal the fact of the division from the listener, and to give the impression of an unbroken passage, as shown in Ex. 138*b*, and for this purpose absolute equality of touch and tone is essential:—

Ex. 137. *Allegro.* BEETHOVEN, Op. 31, No. 2.



Ex. 138. (*a*) *Allegro giojoso.* MENDELSSOHN, Op. 43.

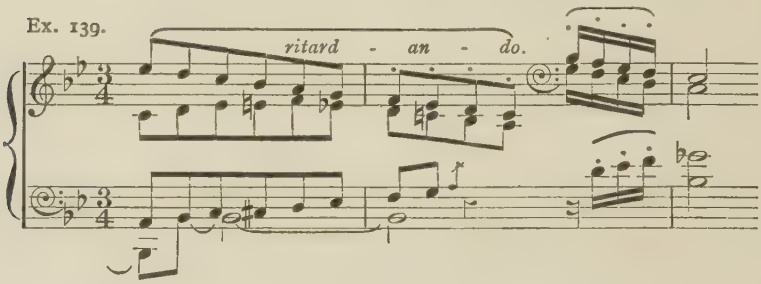


Besides variety of tone, expression is largely dependent on variation of *tempo*, and in this respect sound judgment is necessary, in order to find the proper medium between exaggeration and dulness. Simple increase or diminution of speed, as indicated by the words *accelerando* or *rallentando*, is a variation the due effect of which depends on the observance of a strict proportion in the increase or diminution of the length of the notes, as with *crescendo* and *diminuendo* (see page 58), but there is one point to be taken into consideration, which does not affect gradation of tone—namely, the variety of the note-lengths as written. Thus, in a passage consisting of notes of the same written length,

and requiring to be played *rallentando*, the slackening of speed may proceed regularly, each note being made longer than its predecessor in the same ratio throughout, but where notes of various lengths are present, slackening should be avoided at the moment of the change of notation. For instance, in the second bar of Ex. 139, a change occurs from quavers to semiquavers. Now, if the player's interpretation of the direction "ritardando" should lead him to increase the length of the semiquavers suddenly, or to any considerable extent, there would be a danger that the listener might mistake them for quavers played in strict time, and thus lose the sense of the *ritardando*. To prevent any such misunderstanding, the first two of the semiquavers must be made equal to the quaver immediately preceding, after which the *tempo* may be again slackened in the subsequent semiquavers, as the new rate of semiquaver-movement will have been established, and the *ritardando* will again become intelligible. Examples of this kind of rhythmical *ritardando* abound in the works of Schumann, the "Kreisleriana" furnishing several instances besides the one quoted below, of which perhaps the best occur in bars three and ten of No. 4:—

SCHUMANN, Op. 16, No. 2.

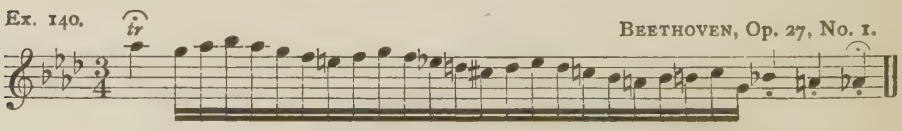
Ex. 139.



An exception to the above rule occurs when the composer alters the note-lengths, *not* for the purpose of varying the rhythm, but in order to indicate a considerable and forcible slackening of speed. The following is an example of a passage of this kind; in performance, the proportion of crotchet to semiquavers is not to be observed strictly, but instead of this the speed of the semiquavers is slackened towards the end of the passage, and the first crotchet is made only a little longer than the last semiquaver, the remaining two crotchets being then considerably lengthened. The result is a much more sudden and powerful slackening of *tempo* than would have been implied if the passage had been written in notes of equal length, with merely the direction *ritardando*:—

Ex. 140.

BEETHOVEN, Op. 27, No. 1.



The employment of variation of *tempo* is by no means restricted to the places where it is definitely indicated by the composer. Both increase and diminution of speed are always available as aids to expression, and much may be gained by their judicious introduction, but it must be borne in mind that they should never be employed in an eccentric or capricious manner, their proper function being to attract the attention of the listener to any particular phrase by emphasising its legitimate expression. Thus the agitated effect of a *crescendo* phrase is often enhanced by a slight increase of speed, as in Ex. 141, while a slackening of *tempo* adds to the dying effect of a very soft close (Ex. 142). It will also be observed that diminution of speed *increases* the effect of both *diminuendo* and *crescendo*, and is therefore equally applicable to either. The combination with *diminuendo* has already been noticed (Ex. 142), and Ex. 143 is a good instance of the increased breadth and dignity obtainable by combining *ritardandando* with *crescendo* :—

Ex. 141. *Molto più lento.* CHOPIN, Op. 20.

poco a poco cres.

CHOPIN, Op. 9, No. 3.

Ex. 142. *Adagio.* 8va

pp *smorz.* *rall.* *ppp*

Ped.

Ex. 143. SCHUMANN, Op. 13.

rit.

But perhaps the most obvious opportunity for the introduction of *ritardando* occurs when a passage leads into a principal subject, either directly (Ex. 144)

or with a pause immediately before the entrance of the subject (Ex. 145). The effect of *ritardando* so employed is to throw the principal subject into relief, and so impress it on the attention of the listener, and a similar advantage may be obtained where a passage leads directly into the subject, by making a slight silent pause, which must not be long enough to seriously disturb the rhythm, between the last note of the passage and the first note of the subject, as shown in Ex. 146. This serves instead of actual *ritardando* :—

Ex. 144. *Largo e mesto.* BEETHOVEN, Op. 10, No. 3.

f *decres.* *rit.*

Ex. 145. CHOPIN, Op. 15, No. 2.

Tempo 1mo.

molto rall. e dim.

Ex 146. *Allegro.* BEETHOVEN, Op. 31, No. 3.

When it is desired to emphasise a single note in a phrase without giving it additional strength, the effect may be gained by lingering slightly upon it, care being taken that the slight pause made is not sufficiently long to distort the rhythm. The following is an example of this kind of treatment, and is particularly interesting from the fact that it is given by Schindler in his "Life of Beethoven," exactly as quoted below, as his own recollection of the manner in which Beethoven himself used to play the phrase in question :—

Ex. 147. *Allegro.* BEETHOVEN, Op. 14, No. 1.

There still remains to be noticed one more modification of *tempo*, which is of the greatest service to expression when suitably introduced, but which requires great caution and sound judgment in use, since it is more liable than any other variation of speed to degenerate into affectation. This is the *tempo*

rubato (literally "robbed time"), in which one part of a phrase is quickened, and another slackened in proportion, so that the general march of the rhythm is undisturbed, and the duration of the whole phrase remains the same as it would have been if played in strict time throughout. Such variations are too delicate and subtle to be expressed in notation, and the effect must depend for its success entirely on the discretion of the player, but it should be observed that any independent accompaniment to a *rubato* phrase must always keep strict time, and it is, therefore, quite possible that no note of a *rubato* melody will fall exactly together with its corresponding note in the accompaniment, except, perhaps, the first note in each bar. The following is a good example of *rubato* melody with strict accompaniment:—

Ex. 148. CHOPIN, Op. 52.

rubato. *p* *cres.*

All such variations of *tempo* as have been described above are in their proper place in modern music, from Weber onwards, and should be employed very sparingly, if at all, in the works of the earlier composers, the measured and strict character of whose music demands a like strictness of time. Perhaps the only place in which a *ritardando* is permissible in the compositions of Bach is at the close of a movement, where a broadening of the *tempo*, followed by a pause on the final chord, has frequently a very good effect.

Last, though by no means least in importance, of the various aids to expression which present themselves for consideration, is the use of the pedals, both of which exercise a great influence on the character of the pianoforte as a musical instrument. In order to understand the nature of this influence, and the way in which it affects the expression, it will be necessary to ascertain exactly what takes place when either of the pedals is brought into action.

The function of the pedal on the right is to remove the dampers from the strings, and so to allow any string which may be struck to continue sounding until the momentum derived from the blow is exhausted and the string has come to rest. If a string be struck without using the pedal, the damper attached to the key falls upon it directly the finger is raised, and causes the cessation of the sound. Thus the dampers provide the means for playing *staccato*, the pedal the means for producing sustained sound. This pedal is very generally called the "loud pedal," but the name is inappropriate and

misleading, since the increase of loudness, irrespective of the touch, merely results from the combination of a larger number of different sounds than could be grasped at once by the hands alone, while the use of the pedal, for its proper purpose of sustaining, is quite as effective in *pianissimo* as in *forte* passages. A more suitable designation, and one frequently used, is that of "damper pedal."

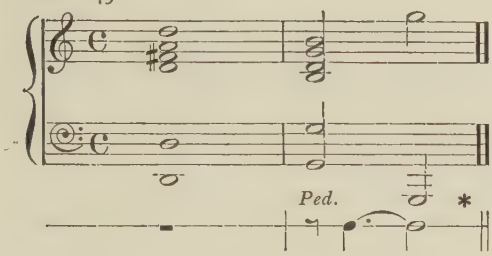
The great utility of the pedal lies in the fact that it practically gives the player the advantage of a third hand, since a note can be struck, say in the middle of the keyboard, and sustained while both hands are engaged at any distance from it. But since all the notes sounded during the holding down of the pedal are sustained alike, it follows that clearness of the harmonic progressions can only be obtained by changing the pedal—that is, by releasing and again depressing it—at each change of the harmony, as otherwise two conflicting harmonies would be heard at the same time, and the result would be a discordant confusion. Not that such confusion is always disagreeable in effect; on the contrary, it is occasionally desired by the composer, and expressly indicated, as in the last fifteen bars of the first movement of Mendelssohn's Fantasia in F sharp minor, Op. 28.

During the holding of the pedal, a true *staccato* is of course impossible, but an excellent effect is sometimes obtained by the continued repetition of a *staccato* chord while the pedal is sustained, as in the opening bars of Mendelssohn's Andante and Rondo Capriccioso, Op. 14. The effect is somewhat orchestral in character, resembling detached chords on stringed instruments accompanied by soft sustained harmonies on the wind.

The chief difficulty to be encountered in learning to use the pedal is the necessity for depressing it immediately *after* striking the notes which it is intended to sustain, instead of following the natural inclination to move hand and foot together. The reason for this necessity will be best understood on examining the following example. Here we have two chords, the second of which has to be sustained by means of the pedal. On striking the first chord, the dampers will be raised from the strings D, F sharp, and A, and if the pedal be taken precisely with the striking of the second chord the fall of these dampers will be arrested, and they will be prevented from reaching their strings, whereby the sounds of F sharp and A will be mingled with those of the chord of G, producing a confusion of harmony. But if the pedal be taken a little later than the moment of striking the second chord, all the dampers except those of the chord of G will have had time to fall upon their strings and silence them, and the second chord will be sustained free from all impurity. The ordinary indication by means of the abbreviation *Ped.* followed by the * is not sufficiently accurate to represent exactly the moment of pressing the pedal, and consequently various methods have been devised from time to time to remedy this indefiniteness. Of these the best is that invented by Hans Schmitt, of Vienna, in 1863; and described in his exhaustive treatise on the subject, "Das Pedal des Claviers," in which the pressure and release of the pedal are precisely indicated by notes and rests

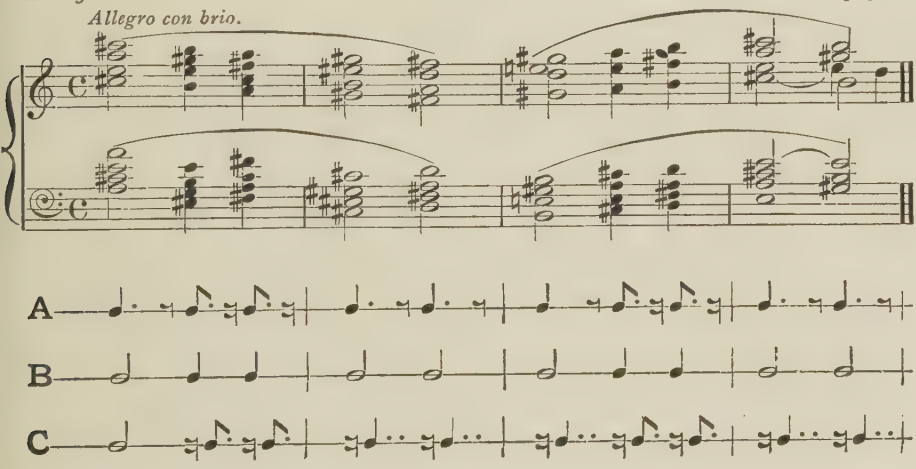
placed on a single line, drawn underneath the music staves, as shown in the example :—

Ex. 149.



By the proper management of the pedal, a succession of chords, which could not be connected by the fingers alone, may be played perfectly *legato*, and this is an advantage of the first importance in the rendering of certain phrases. For example, if the chords of Ex. 150 be played without pedal, a certain break of continuity between them is unavoidable, and the same break will be perceptible even though the pedal be used if it is released before the termination of each chord, according to the notation given in line A. If, again, in order to prevent this break, the pedal is used with each chord, but is allowed to remain pressed down throughout the whole duration of the chord, as in line B, the confusion already spoken of will result, owing to the dampers of one chord having been prevented from falling upon their strings by the action of the pedal applied to the next following. The true pedalling, therefore, of such a phrase is that shown in line C, where the pedal is released precisely as each chord is struck, and taken again immediately afterwards, by which means each chord is sustained for its full length, and a perfect *legato* is obtained without the slightest confusion :—

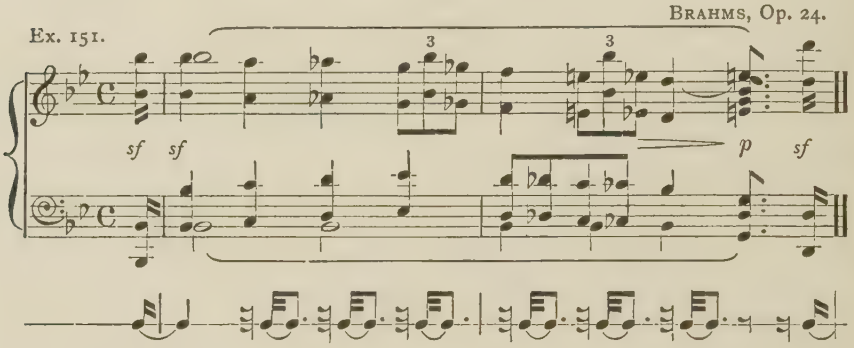
Ex. 150. BEETHOVEN, Op. 53.



The vibrations of the heavy bass strings of the pianoforte are far more energetic than those of the strings of higher pitch, and a slight momentary touch of the damper on a sounding bass string, though it weakens the tone, is by no means sufficient to silence it completely. This may be proved by first depressing the pedal, and then striking a note *fortissimo* and *staccato* in the lower part of the keyboard, say below the limits of the bass stave, when it will be found possible to change the pedal some six or eight times without entirely extinguishing the sound, provided the action of the foot be sufficiently rapid, whereas a similarly treated note in the middle or upper registers would be silenced after two, or at most three, changes of pedal.

This fact renders it possible to sustain a bass note during a succession of changing harmonies which would not admit of the pedal being held down throughout the whole phrase. If, for instance, Ex. 151 be pedalled according to the notation given in the lower line, the low B flat with which it commences may be made audible throughout, without injury to the clearness of the chords in the upper parts, and occasions are very frequent in modern music when this kind of treatment is of the greatest possible service :—

Ex. 151. BRAHMS, Op. 24.

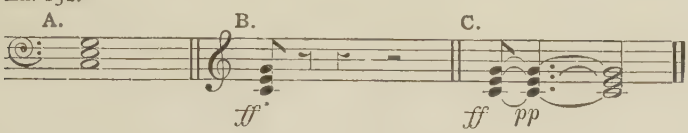


In addition to its ordinary function of sustaining sounds, the pedal possesses a remarkable power of enriching and improving their quality, a property which, though certainly not contemplated in its invention, is of the greatest importance to a musical and expressive performance. It is clear that this enrichment or reinforcement of the tone, which is quite unmistakable, cannot proceed directly from any action of the pedal apparatus itself, but must be the result of some external cause which the pedal brings into operation, and this, as we shall presently see, is the case.

By way of experiment, let the chord shown in bar A of the following example be carefully and *silently* depressed by the left hand and held down, so that the dampers of the notes C, E, and G are removed from their strings without the hammers being permitted to strike. Now let the same chord be forcibly and sharply struck with the right hand, an octave higher, as in bar B, the left hand still remaining in its place, when it will be found that the notes of the upper chords are softly sustained, the effect being somewhat as indicated

in bar C. Obviously, these sustained sounds cannot proceed from the strings struck by the right hand, because these were immediately damped by the removal of the hand from the keys; they must, therefore, be given out by those strings which have been freed from their dampers by the left hand, and so put into a condition fit for vibration, in proof of which, let the left hand be now removed, when the dampers fall and the sounds are at once extinguished :—

Ex. 152.

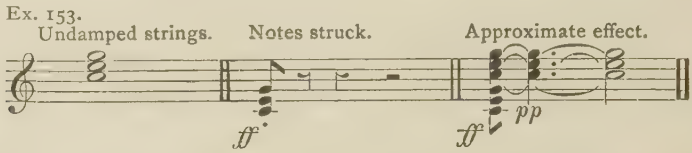


This experiment proves that a stretched string (or indeed any other body capable of producing a musical sound) may be set in vibration without any direct blow or shock, merely by the vibration of another string in its neighbourhood, provided that its own rate of vibration synchronises with that of the exciting sound—in other words, that the exciting sound forms a consonant interval with the sound to be excited. But it will be observed that the sounds elicited from the strings which were freed from their dampers (bar A) are not the sounds which would have resulted if these notes had been played; they are an octave higher, and are in unison with the strings actually struck (bar B). The reason of this is that a stretched string vibrates, not only as a whole, from end to end, but also in sections, the lengths of which are aliquot parts of the length of the whole string, and these vibrating sections are separated by points of non-vibration, called nodes. The vibration of the whole length gives the true note of the string, termed the fundamental note, and those of the segmental divisions produce the so-called overtones or harmonics, to the presence of which the particular *quality* of the sound is due. The vibration of a stretched string is, therefore, of a highly complex character, and the resultant tone is not less so, being never simple, but always composed of a fundamental sound, together with various harmonics, which indeed can be perfectly distinguished by an attentive ear. Now when a string is made to speak by sympathetic vibration, as in the experiment described above, it does not vibrate as a whole, but divides itself into portions of such length that their vibrations (which are thus the vibrations of overtones and not of the fundamental tone) shall synchronise with those of the exciting sound, and be in unison with it. In the example given, the strings to be excited were an octave below the exciting causes, and the segments into which the lower strings divided themselves were half the length of the whole strings, thus agreeing with the known law that the half of a string gives a sound an octave higher than that of the whole string. If the undamped strings had been an octave lower than those in bar A of the example, the result would have been the same, except that the sustained sounds would be a little weaker, because they would then have obediently divided themselves into quarters instead of

halves, and since the fourth part of a string-length gives two octaves above its fundamental tone, the vibrations would still synchronise with those of the exciting sounds.

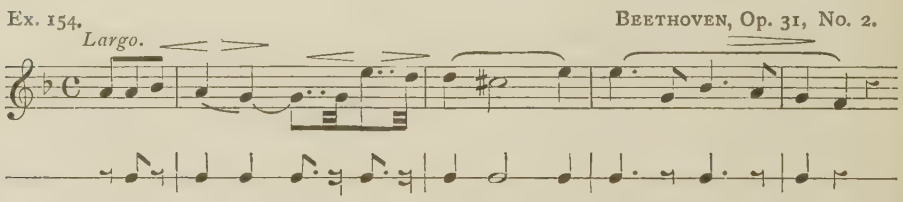
Undamped strings of *higher* pitch than the exciting sounds may also be made to speak by sympathetic vibration, only in this case it will be the overtones of the exciting sounds which synchronise with the fundamental notes of the higher strings, and it will therefore be these fundamental notes which are called forth, as shown in the following example:—

Ex. 153.



This necessarily brief glance at a highly interesting subject, the fuller treatment of which must be sought in works dealing with the science of acoustics, will suffice to explain the reason of the richer and fuller tone obtained by the use of the pedal. For it is clear that if a note, say middle C, be struck while the pedal is held down, all the C's of the keyboard, being freed from their dampers, will speak in sympathy with it; those below the note actually played lending their overtones and reinforcing it in the unison, while those above contribute their fundamental notes, which, although too faint to be distinguished as separate sounds, being, as they are, generated merely by the overtones of the note struck, add, nevertheless, something to the general richness of tone. It is on this account that the pedal is so frequently, indeed, almost continuously used by good pianists in cases where there can be no question of sustaining sound—for instance, in the performance of an unaccompanied melody, as in Ex. 154. The effect of such phrases as this when played without pedal is so dry and unsympathetic that its employment is quite indispensable:—

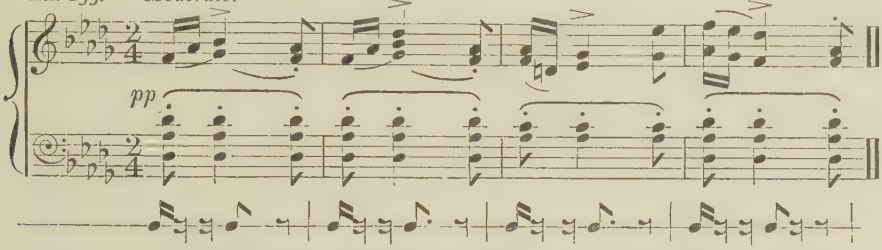
Ex. 154.



A yet further advantage may be derived from sympathetic vibration by the use of the pedal, as follows. If a chord be played in the middle or lower part of the keyboard, with a fair amount of pressure, so that the tone may be full and singing, and the pedal be taken some little time after the chord is struck, the strings which are in unison with this chord, being then released from their dampers, will begin to sound, and will gradually reinforce and enrich the tone of the chord already heard, so as to produce a slight increase of power, thus going far to remove, at any rate partially, the reproach that the pianoforte is

incapable of producing a *crescendo* on a single sound. Properly used, the effect has a decided charm, and is of especial value in syncopated phrases, as in Ex. 155, which is, perhaps, one of the most effective instances of its use that could be chosen :—

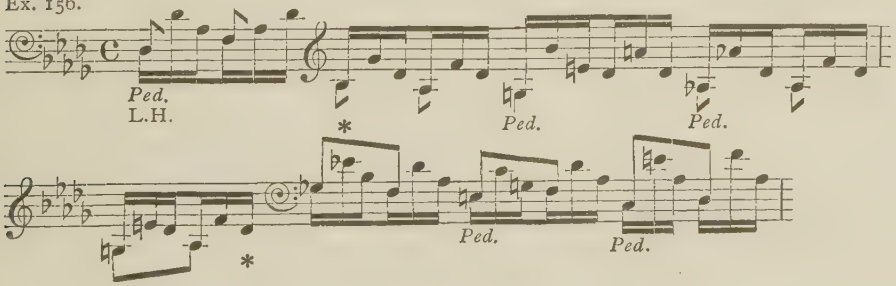
Ex. 155. *Moderato.* SCHUBERT, Op. 94, No. 4.



The use of the abbreviation *Ped.* as a sign for the employment of the damper-pedal is of comparatively recent introduction, the earlier composers having been accustomed to write the words "*senza sordini*"—that is, "without dampers"—to indicate the depression of the pedal, and "*con sordini*" for its release. The last movement of Beethoven's Sonata in C sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2, was so marked by the composer, the direction given being *con sordini* for the arpeggio passages with which the movement begins, and *senza sordini* for the two chords at the end of the second bar. In modern editions, however, the use of these expressions has been discontinued, and the usual sign employed instead, and it is perhaps well that the change has been made, as there is always some risk of the meaning of the word *sordini* being misunderstood, owing to the fact that certain composers have used it (in the sense of *mute*) to indicate the employment of the left-hand or soft pedal.

Modern composers frequently further abbreviate the sign for the damper-pedal to the single letter *P.*, and the innovation is an improvement, as it makes it possible to indicate more clearly the precise moment at which the pedal should be taken, and Liszt has introduced the custom, now generally followed, of simply repeating the syllable *Ped.*, without any other sign, where a rapid change of pedal is required, reserving the use of the asterisk for places where the pedal is to be definitely discontinued for a time, as in the following example (the bass only is quoted) :—

Ex. 156. *Vivace.* LISZT, WALDESRAUSCHEN.



The object of the second pedal is, primarily, to weaken the tone, and there are three ways in which this object may be attained, the mechanical action of the pedal, generally known as the soft pedal (a more appropriate name for it than the term "loud pedal" is for its companion), varying accordingly.

In the first method, the pressure of the pedal brings the hammers considerably closer to the strings than their normal striking distance, and the blow is thereby weakened and the tone softened. The quality of the tone is not affected, and the result is in nowise different from a *pianissimo* tone produced by the unaided finger. In the second, the reduction of power is effected by the interposition of a strip of soft woollen material between the hammers and the strings, so as to deaden the sound. With this arrangement the quality is considerably, and sometimes disastrously affected, as in many instruments the tone is so reduced as to become practically inaudible. Upright pianos are generally provided with one or other of these contrivances, as their construction does not lend itself to the employment of the third method, which is, nevertheless, the only one capable of giving truly artistic results. In this method, which is invariably applied to the construction of grand pianos, the action of the pedal moves the whole keyboard a small distance to one side, so that the hammer strikes upon two strings only of the three with which each note (except those in the lowest register) is provided. The result of this action is two-fold; the power of tone is weakened by the reduction of the number of strings struck, and, what is of far greater importance from a musical point of view, the third string, being freed from its damper by the depression of the key, vibrates in sympathy with those actually struck, and contributes a delicate and silvery quality of sound which is quite as characteristic in its way as that produced by the use of the mute on the violin. On account of this alteration in the quality of the tone, the employment of the soft pedal for the mere purpose of playing *pianissimo* is to be deprecated, and although its use may be convenient at times, there is never any real necessity for the player to avail himself of its assistance, since a delicate and well-controlled touch should be capable of reducing the tone almost to extinction without any particular difficulty. The student should therefore cultivate the power of producing a perfect *pianissimo* by the fingers alone, and the soft pedal should be employed in those passages only, and they are fairly numerous, in which its peculiar effect is an advantage.

Formerly, the soft pedal shifted the keyboard so far that only one of the three strings was struck, as is shown by the direction *una corda*, by which its employment is indicated even at the present time, and in many instruments there was a small stop or wedge at the end of the keyboard, by means of which the player was able to control the movement, so as to play upon either one or two strings at will, but the use of the single string has long been discarded, probably because it was found to be too weak to resist the blow of the hammer, and therefore did not remain well in tune.

Among other composers, Beethoven had a great liking for the special quality of tone afforded by the use of the soft pedal, and sometimes employed

it throughout a complete movement, as, for example, in the *Andante* of the Concerto in G, Op. 58. In some passages which he has marked *una corda*, the effect intended is by no means *pianissimo*, as for instance in Ex. 157, which contains chords meant to be played as loudly as the use of the soft pedal will permit, a proof that he considered the particular tone-quality as an effect quite apart from the volume of sound produced:—

Ex. 157. BEETHOVEN, Op. 110.

una corda. *cres - - - - cen -*

Ped.

- - - do.

Beethoven also occasionally desired to pass *gradually* from one string to three, as indicated by his directions "*due e poi tre corde*," and "*nach und nach mehrere Saiten.*" With the instruments of the present day, on which *una corda* really means *due corde*, these directions cannot be exactly carried out, but the desired effect may be sufficiently well realised by taking care to alter the touch in the direction of *pianissimo* at the moment of releasing the soft pedal, so that the strength of the first few notes played on three strings may approximate to that of the last notes for which only two were employed, somewhat as in Ex. 158. By these means the transition will be rendered as gradual as possible. The directions above the example are Beethoven's, those between the staves and underneath show the manner of performance:—

Ex. 158. BEETHOVEN, Op. 110.

Allegro ma non troppo.
una corda. *crescendo.*

poi a poi tre corde.

cres - - cen - do. . . al mf *pp* *poco cres.*

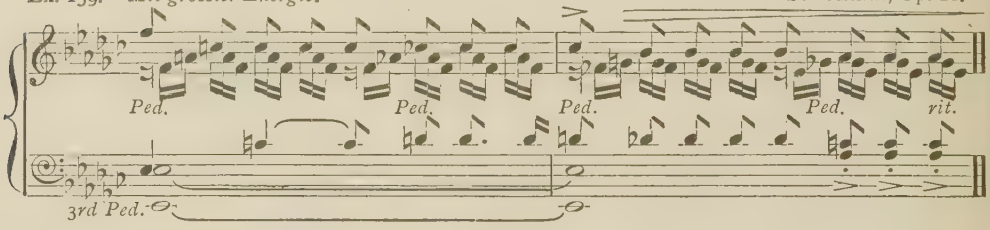
una corda. *tre corde.*

Besides the two pedals in ordinary use, others have been invented from time to time, and experimentally introduced, but only to be discarded as possessing

no real artistic value. Among these were pedals for imitating the sounds of a bell, a drum, and a bassoon. The effect of the last-named, called "pedale di fagotto," was obtained by bringing a strip of stiff paper or parchment into slight contact with the vibrating strings, and indications for its use may be found as late as Hummel, who has it in a small Polonaise in F major, which he has marked "*col registro di fagotto.*"

In addition to those mentioned above, there is one extra pedal which is of far greater importance, and which has been adopted by Steinway and other makers of renown in the construction of their instruments. This is a pedal for the purpose of sustaining a single sound, generally in the bass, during a succession of changing harmonies, without any of the confusion which is inseparable from the use of the damper-pedal under like conditions. It is questionable whether opportunities for the use of this third pedal, which is placed between the other two, are of sufficiently frequent occurrence to make it likely that it will be generally adopted, especially as it is a somewhat costly addition to the instrument, but there can be no doubt that under certain circumstances its use would be entirely beneficial. For instance, in Ex. 159, in which the pedal is marked by the composer through two bars without break, the low E flat might be sustained by means of the third pedal, and the damper-pedal changed with each change of harmony, and the result would be a great gain in point of clearness of harmonic progression, without any loss of richness and fulness of effect :—

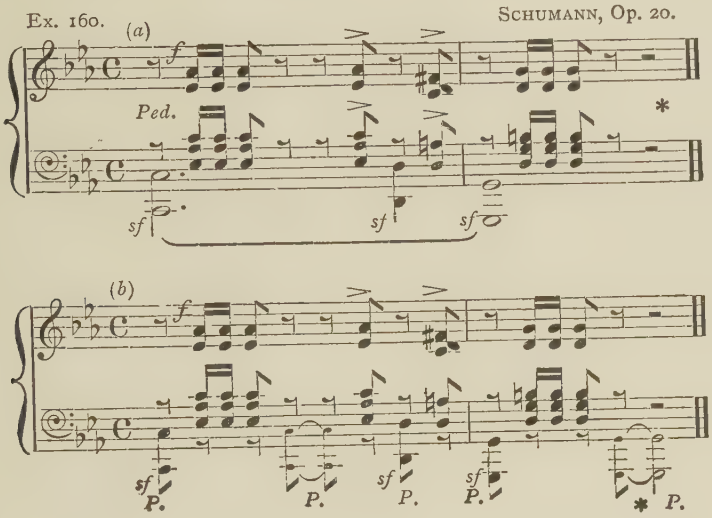
Ex. 159. *Mit grösster Energie.* SCHUMANN, Op. 26.



In the absence of a third pedal, a similar advantage may sometimes be obtained, at least to a certain extent, by a judicious manipulation of the keys. Thus, if the confusion resulting from the use of the pedal as marked in Ex. 160*a* be objected to, it may be obviated, and the general effect of the phrase much improved, in the manner following. As soon as the three repeating chords have been played, the left hand *gently* depresses the two lowest C's, without allowing the hammers to strike, and the pedal is changed, that is to say, is released and immediately taken again; by these means the sounds of the upper chords will have been silenced, on account of the change of pedal, but the dampers of the lowest notes having been prevented from falling on their strings, these will continue to sound, and, being sustained by the renewed pedal, will still form a bass to the next chord. The same procedure will apply to subsequent chords, and the complete treatment of the phrase will be that

shown, as nearly as it is possible to express it in writing, in Ex. 160*b*, in which the keys which are to be *silently* depressed are indicated by the small notes:—

Ex. 160. (*a*) SCHUMANN, Op. 20.



VII.

ORNAMENTS.

Ornaments in pianoforte music, as expressed by signs or by small notes, have been described, more or less completely, in all pianoforte-schools and instruction books, but the directions given as to their rendering have been found so confused and contradictory as to give rise to the impression, very prevalent at one time, that such things were merely matters of taste, and that the manner of executing them must be left to the discretion of the performer. Of late years, however, attention has been directed to the historical side of the subject, and it was highly desirable that this should be so, if only from the fact that Bach accepted and constantly employed the ornaments in use in his day, and that it is, therefore, impossible to play his music as he meant it, unless one understands exactly what it was that he intended to express by the various signs. Fortunately, we have unimpeachable information in a work by his son, Carl Phillip Emanuel Bach, entitled "*Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen*" ("Essay on the true method of playing the Clavier"), in which no fewer than nine chapters are occupied with examples and explanations of the so-called *Manieren*, or ornaments, and even if Emanuel Bach's practice did not accord in every minute detail with that of his father, there can be no doubt, from internal evidence, and from corroboration afforded by other contemporary works, that it is to be accepted as an entirely reliable guide.

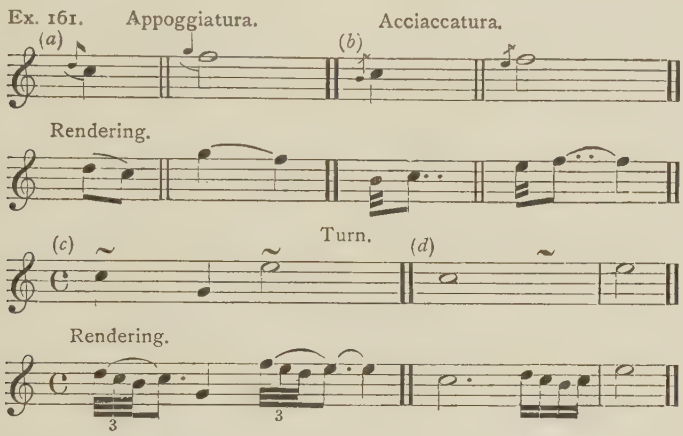
Interesting as the subject is, this is not the place in which to discuss the history of ornaments, the earliest of which date from the beginning of the seventeenth century, or to attempt a full description of them; moreover, such a course has been rendered unnecessary by the recent publication of Edward Dannreuther's masterly and exhaustive treatise on the subject.* Viewed from the practical side, however, there are certain matters relating to their execution with which it is necessary that the student should be acquainted, and these we may proceed to consider.

The first point to be noted, and perhaps the most important, is the rule that all ornaments must be played *within the duration of the note* to which they are applied. Just as a material and visible ornament, such as a carving or painting, must be *upon* the surface which is decorated thereby, and cannot be conceived *apart* from that surface, so must an audible ornament form a part

* "Musical Ornamentation," by E. Dannreuther (Novello & Co.). Among other most valuable matter, this book contains a literal translation of those portions of Emanuel Bach's "Versuch" which refer to the rendering of ornaments.

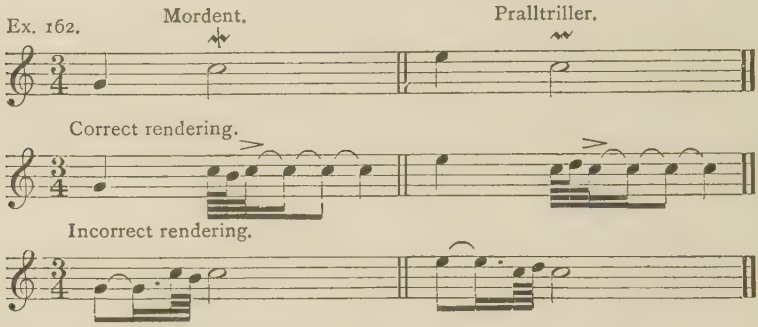
of the time-value of the note which it embellishes, and cannot precede or follow it, duration of sound being the correlative of space in matter.

Ornaments, whether indicated by signs or by small notes, are always extrinsic to the value of the bar, the time of which is complete without them, and since the duration of no one bar may exceed that of any other, the note to which an ornament is applied must lose just so much of its value as will suffice for the execution of that ornament. The ornament may thus occupy the whole value of the note, as in a prolonged trill, or a portion, and this portion may be either at the commencement of the note, as in the *appoggiatura*, *acciaccatura*, or turn written *over* the note (Ex. 161*a*, *b*, *c*), or at the end, as in the turn *after* the note (Ex. 161*d*):—

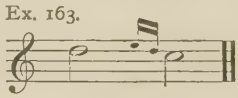


In order, therefore, to render any ornament correctly, it is necessary to ascertain to which particular note the ornament belongs, and then to rob this note of a small portion of its written value, either at the commencement or at the end, according to the description of ornament which is applied to it. In most cases the ornament can be assigned to its proper note without difficulty, especially when it is expressed by a sign placed over the note, but occasionally some uncertainty may arise, which can only be removed by a closer study of the character of the ornament. The sign of the shake or trill, "*tr*," is always placed directly above or below the note to which it belongs, and the whole value of the note, as a rule, is taken up by the execution of the ornament, which consists of the regular alternation of the written note with the note next above it. The *Mordent*, ⁓, and *Pralltriller* or *Schneller*, ⁓, two ornaments constantly met with in the works of Bach, and also, though with less frequency, in those of Handel, consist of three rapid notes played at the commencement of the note to which they belong, and having the accent on the last of the three. The only difference between them is that in the Mordent the principal note alternates with the note below, and in the Pralltriller with the note above. On account of the similarity of the two ornaments, and in the absence of any

English name for the Pralltriller, the latter is often called the *inverted mordent*, a sufficiently convenient title. The respective signs by which these ornaments are indicated are placed above the notes to which they apply, and in their execution the commencing notes must never be allowed to anticipate the beat :—



As to the correct rendering of the above ornaments, then, no doubt or difficulty can arise, but the same can scarcely be said of such ornaments as are expressed by small notes, the so-called grace-notes, because, under differing circumstances, they may mean different things. For instance, the two small notes of Ex. 163 may form an ornament called a Slide (in German, *Schleifer*), in which case they will occupy the commencement of the large note by which they are followed, or they may be After-notes (Ger., *Nachschläge*)—notes which embellish the *end* of a long note—and will therefore require to be played during a portion of the note which precedes them :—



To determine the proper execution in such cases it is necessary to examine the context. Thus, in the second bar of Ex. 164*a*, the harmony is that of F minor, and the first note of the ornament, and likewise the large note which follows, are essential notes of the chord by which it is accompanied, while the second of the two small notes, B flat, appears as a passing-note, under perfectly regular conditions. There is, therefore, nothing to prevent the whole ornament from being accompanied by the chord of F minor, and it is accordingly recognised as a slide, and is played within the value of the crotchet. But the ornament shown at *b* in the example, though similar in appearance, is differently circumstanced, and requires other treatment. Here the harmony is that of G minor, and the second of the two small notes, B flat, is an essential note, instead of a passing-note, while the next following large note, A, is itself an auxiliary note, or note foreign to the harmony, and, therefore, unfit to bear a diatonic ornament. If, however, we refer the two grace notes to the preceding instead of the subsequent note, we find their introduction fully justified and explained, on the ground that the first of them, C, is an auxiliary note above

B flat, and the second is the return to the essential note, which progression is regular, indeed imperative, in the treatment of auxiliary notes under all circumstances. The conclusion arrived at is that the small notes are after-notes, and are played at the close of the preceding note:—

Ex. 164. (a) SCHUBERT, Op. 94, No. 3. (b) SCHUBERT, Op. 142, No. 3.

Correct rendering.

Incorrect rendering.

The same careful consideration is necessary when dealing with grace-notes occurring singly. The single grace-note may be either a fore-note (German, *Vorschlag*) or an after-note (*Nachschlag*), and it is not always easy to assign to such a note its proper place in the bar. Sometimes it is possible for the composer to indicate his intention unmistakably, as Schumann has done in many instances (Ex. 165); other cases must be judged by the general conditions under which they appear. The majority of single grace-notes are either *appoggiature* or *acciaccature*, the rendering of which has already been shown (Ex. 161). Others, of not very frequent occurrence, are true after-notes, as in Ex. 166*a*, where they appear as passing-notes between the main notes of the melody. Schumann has occasionally employed small notes in this sense, preferring to write them thus in order to leave to the player more freedom of interpretation as regards their duration than would have been possible had they been written as notes of ordinary size, incorporated in the time of the bar (Ex. 166*b*):—

SCHUMANN, Op. 12, No. 3.

Langsam.

Ex. 165.

Rendering.

Ex. 166. (a) BACH, Aria. (b) SCHUMANN, Op. 6, No. 5.

Correct rendering (approximate).

Incorrect rendering.

Grace-notes at a distance belong to the same harmony as the main note and are to be taken on the beat, the principal note being slightly delayed (Ex. 167*a*). In the exceptional cases in which they are anticipatory, as in Ex. 167*b*, they must be understood to represent a short note which has been written small in order to indicate greater freedom of rhythm, as with Schumann's grace-note in Ex. 166*b* :—

Ex. 167. (a) *Andantino.* SCHUBERT, Op. 94, No. 2.

Correct rendering.

Incorrect rendering

(b) BEETHOVEN, Op. 51, No. 1.

Correct rendering.

Incorrect rendering.

Very often, in modern music, the grace-note at a distance is not a melodic ornament at all, but merely represents a chord of too wide an extent to be taken with one hand (Ex. 168*a*), thus forming a kind of arpeggio. In this sense Schumann sometimes employs a whole chord of grace-notes (Ex. 168*b*). In such cases the grace-notes always fall on the beat :—

Ex. 168. *Allegro vivace.* BEETHOVEN, Op. 2, No. 2. (*a*) (*b*) SCHUMANN, Op. 17.

Rendering (approximate).

When a single grace-note is applied to a chord, it can only affect one note, and the remaining notes are played together with the grace-note, being undisturbed by it (Ex. 169*a*). But since the small note can refer to an inner or lower part as well as the upper, it is often necessary to decide which of the notes of the chord it is intended to embellish, as that note alone will be curtailed and delayed (Ex. 169*b*) :—

Ex. 169. SCHUBERT, Op. 94, No. 3. *Allegro moderato.* (*a*) *Allegro moderato.* (*b*) SCHUBERT, Op. 78.

Correct rendering.

Incorrect rendering.

Single grace-notes occurring in the bass generally represent sustained bass notes which have to be held by means of the pedal, in consequence of the left hand being obliged to quit them immediately, to take up a position at a distance (Ex. 170). Such notes are best played exactly on the beat, as the bass is more solid, and affords better support to the upper parts, when it is not made to anticipate its proper place in the time of the bar. But if the skip of the left hand is made in order to double the melody of the right hand (Ex. 171*a*), or to play an independent melody of its own (Ex. 171*b*), it will be necessary to play the small note slightly in advance of the beat, that the place of the melody-notes in the rhythm may be undisturbed:—

SCHUMANN, Op. 16, No. 3.

Ex. 170.

p *sf*

Rendering.

Ped. * *Ped.*

SCHUMANN, Op. 16, No. 5. SCHUMANN, Op. 14, Var 4.

Ex. 171. (*a*) (*b*)

p *Ped.*

Correct rendering.

Incorrect rendering.

Arpeggios, whether used as ornaments to the melody (Ex. 172) or as accompaniment (Ex. 173), begin on the beat:—

Ex. 172. *Andante sostenuto.* CHOPIN, Op. 37, No. 1.

Rendering.

CHOPIN, Op. 47.

Allegretto. 8va

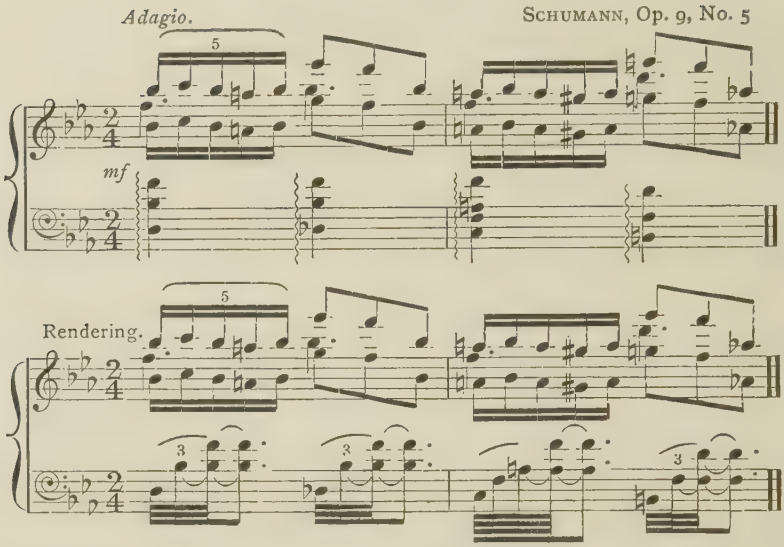
Rendering. 7 8va

Ex. 173. *Langsam.* SCHUMANN, Op. 12, No. 3.

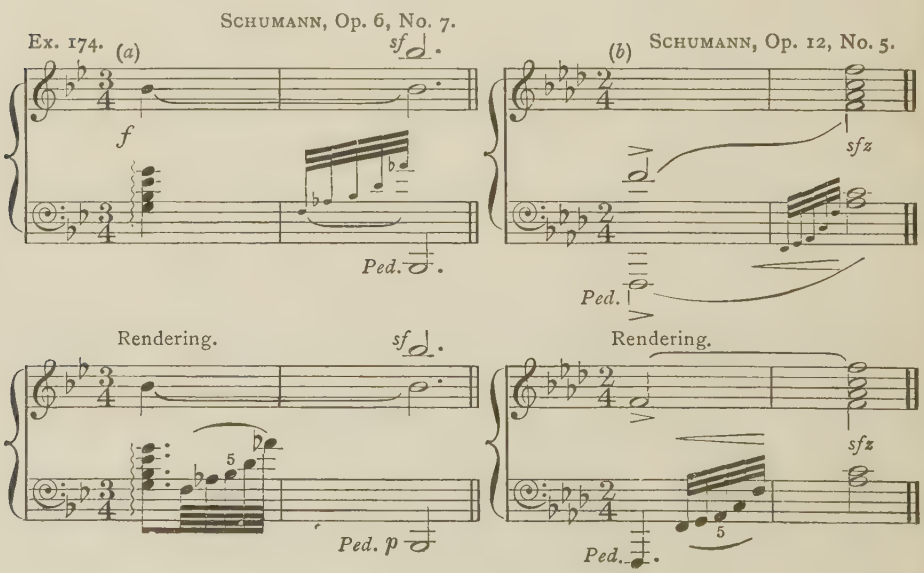
p

Rendering.

p 5

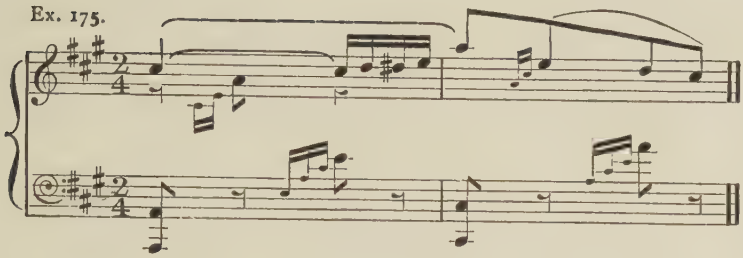


Occasionally, arpeggios may have to be taken before the beat, instead of beginning with it; in such cases, however, the arpeggio can scarcely be reckoned an ornament in the usual sense of the word, but is rather a device employed to express either a very full harmony, which, being out of reach of the hands, has to be sustained by the pedal (Ex. 174*a*, *b*), or else a group of notes really belonging to the time of the preceding beat, but written of small size in order to suggest rapidity and lightness of execution (Ex. 175):—

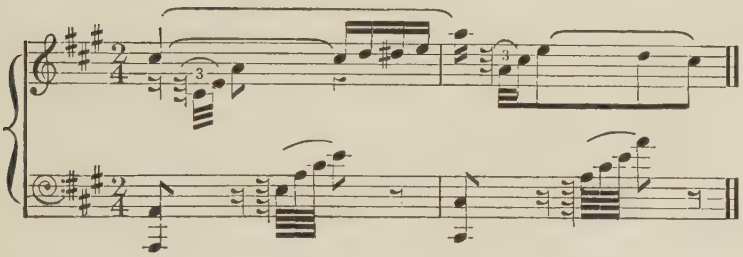


MENDELSSOHN, Op. 62, No. 6.

Ex. 175.



Rendering.



Concerning the execution of the trill it will be necessary to consider a question which frequently presents itself—namely, ought the trill to commence with the note written, or with the upper subsidiary note? The answer depends partly on the conditions under which the trill appears, and partly on the period to which the composition belongs in which it occurs. The modern custom of beginning with the principal note dates from the time of Hummel, who, in his Pianoforte School, written in 1827, refers to the fact that performers have "hitherto followed the practice of the ancient masters, and begun it always with the subsidiary note above," and goes on to say that he has determined "to lay down the rule that, in general, every shake should begin with the note itself, over which it stands, and not with the subsidiary note above, unless the contrary be expressly indicated." Accordingly, trills in the works of Bach, Mozart, Haydn—in fact, in all compositions prior to Hummel—must be understood to begin with the upper note, at least, as a rule, for there have always been certain exceptions. And even if it be occasionally permissible, in accordance with modern taste, to depart from the rule, and begin the trill with the main note, there is, at least, one case in which the earlier method must be strictly adhered to—namely, when the main note has been anticipated by another note of the same pitch, in order to prevent the break of *legato* which would be caused by the repetition of the note (Ex. 176*a*). The same rule must be observed when the prefix to the trill is expressed by two small notes, the

second of which is an anticipation of the main note (Ex. 176*b*), and for the same reason:—

Ex. 176. (*a*) *tr* BACH, Suite Anglaise, No. 4.

Correct rendering.

Incorrect rendering.

5

WEBER, Op. 28, Var. 4.

(*b*) *Andantino.* *tr*

Correct rendering.

Incorrect rendering.

3

The exceptions referred to above occur when the trill appears *ex abrupto*—that is, after a silence (Ex. 177*a*)—and also when it is applied to the second note of some interval which forms an essential part of the melody, and which must therefore be preserved unaltered (Ex. 177*b*). In such cases the trill begins with the main note:—

Ex. 177. (*a*) *tr* BACH, Fugue No. 13, Part II.

Rendering.

5

(*b*) *tr* BACH, "Art of Fugue."

Rendering.

5

In connection with Bach's use of the trill it must be observed that he generally indicated it by the sign ∧∧∨ or ∧∨, and that he seldom employed the sign exclusively used in modern music, *tr*. Since the sign ∧∨ was also used to denote the Pralltriller (Ex. 162, p. 86), it is important to know which of the two ornaments is intended in any particular instance. Sometimes either may be used with propriety, at the discretion of the player, but in the two cases shown in Ex. 178—namely, when the principal note is followed by two short notes forming the ordinary closing notes or turn of the trill (*a*), and when the principal note appears as the last note but one of a perfect cadence or close (*b*)—the sign must always be understood to mean a trill:—

Ex. 178. (*a*) BACH, Suite Anglaise, No. 1.

Rendering.

(*b*) Suite Anglaise, No. 4.

Rendering.

Invention, No. 15.

Rendering.

Prolonged trills on tied notes require no closing note or turn, but end on the main note a little before the end of the tie, as in the following example*:—

Ex. 179. *tr* BACH, Fugue 15, Part II.

Rendering.

* Czerny's edition of the Fugues gives the following incorrect version of this bar:—

tr

Modern composers generally have accepted Hummel's views as to the execution of the trill, and begin it with the principal note, but among them all a notable exception is found in Chopin. Although Chopin's music differs widely from that of Bach in its general character, there are yet many curious points of resemblance in his mode of expressing himself, especially as regards his use and treatment of ornaments. His practice in this respect conforms entirely to that of the earlier composers, a fact which is probably to be attributed to the teaching he received in his youth from a certain German composer named Elsner, who is said to have been a sound musician, and a devoted student of Bach's music. Thus, Chopin writes the prefix to the trill in two small notes, the second of which is of the same pitch as the main note (Ex. 180*a*), clearly showing that he intends the trill itself to begin with the accessory; and a further proof of this intention is found in his notation of trills which are to begin, exceptionally, with the principal note, in which cases he places immediately before the main note a small note of the same pitch, with which to start the trill (Ex. 180*b*), a method again in strict conformity with a very early custom :—

Ex. 180. *Andante.* (*a*) *tr* CHOPIN, Op. 48, No. 2.

Correct rendering.

Incorrect rendering.

Allegretto. (*b*) *tr* CHOPIN, Op. 30, No. 4.

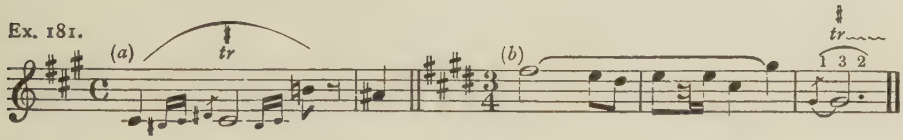
Correct rendering.

Incorrect rendering.

With players who are unaware of Chopin's method of notation, incorrect renderings such as those shown in the above example are of common occurrence,

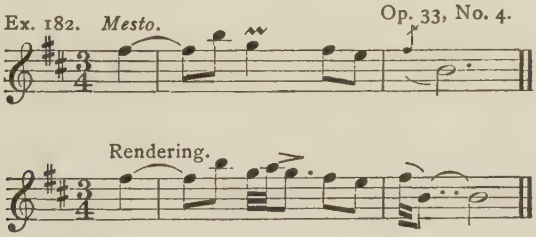
and in order to prevent misapprehensions of the kind, Klindworth, and other editors who have followed him, have endeavoured to ensure correct performance by placing an extra small note between the prefix and the principal note of the trill (Ex. 181*a*), and, in the case of the trill beginning on the main note, by tying the small note to the large one, at the same time indicating the proper order of the notes by marking the fingering (Ex. 181*b*). Such alterations are, however, of doubtful value, although they may prevent mistakes for the time, since they teach nothing as to the general treatment of ornaments in Chopin's works:—

Ex. 181.

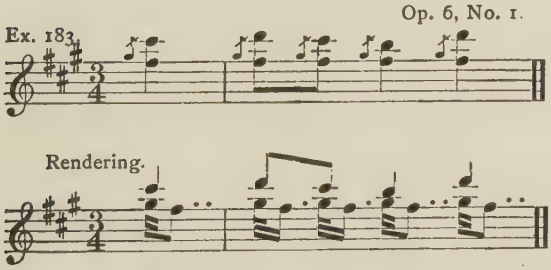


Among other ancient ornaments used by Chopin, and used strictly in accordance with Bach's manner, will be noticed the Pralltriller (Ex. 182), the Acciaccatura and Appoggiatura (the "short and long Vorschlag" of Emanuel Bach), whether applied to the melody or to an inner note in a chord (Ex. 182, 183, and 184), the Schleifer (Ex. 185), and the Nachschlag or after-note, which is used as was customary with the old masters, either to anticipate the next following main note (Ex. 186), or between two notes of the same name (Ex. 187). In very early times, the Nachschlag between two notes of equal pitch was indicated as in Ex. 188:—

Ex. 182. *Mesto.* Op. 33, No. 4.



Ex. 183. Op. 6, No. 1.



Ex. 184. Op. 28, No. 8.

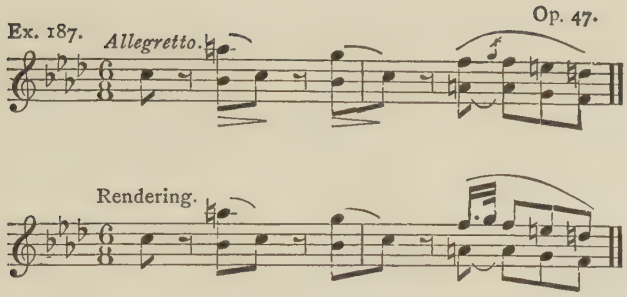
Rendering.

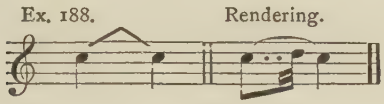
Ex. 185. *Andante.* Op. 22.

Rendering.

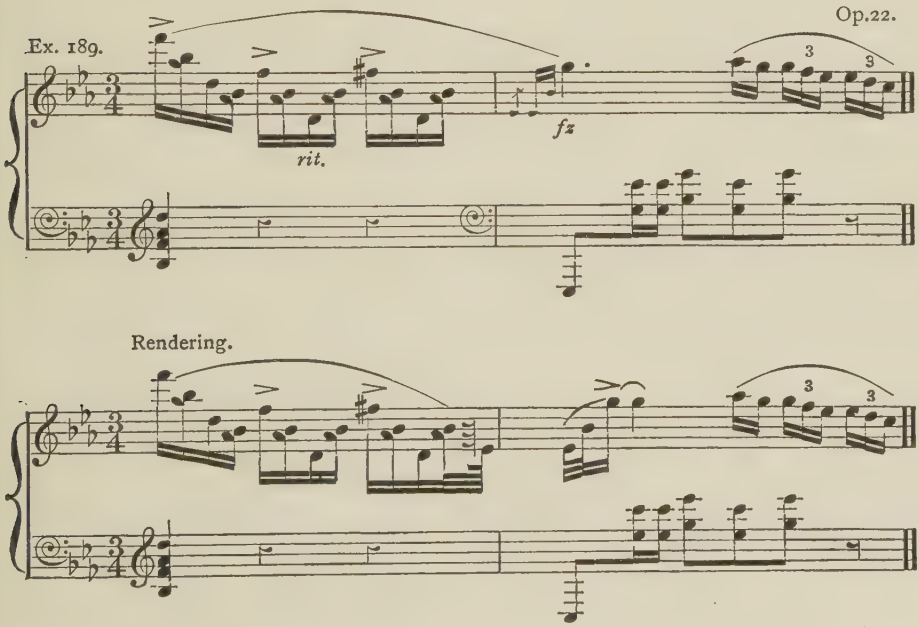
Ex. 186. *Lento.* Op. 32, No. 2.

Rendering.





Turns, both direct and inverted, and arpeggios are also of frequent occurrence in Chopin's works, but the conditions under which they are used are ordinary and require no special illustration, with the exception of a certain arpeggio which is preceded by a small grace-note, as in Ex. 189. In such cases the arpeggio proper begins on the beat, and the grace-note is to be taken as anticipatory :—



Op. 35.

Rendering.

One more ancient form of ornament, appertaining to very early times, remains yet to be mentioned, not for its own sake, for it has long become obsolete, but because a certain survival or rather imitation of it is met with in the works of Beethoven and Chopin. This is the *Bebung*, an effect belonging to the clavichord, on which instrument it was possible to produce a certain trembling or undulation of a sustained tone, together with slight fluctuation of pitch, by rapidly increasing and relaxing the pressure of the finger on the key without actually releasing it. This effect, which is naturally impossible on the pianoforte, is occasionally imitated by Chopin in passages of repeated notes played *legato* and *diminuendo*, with pedal, and possibly *una corda* (Ex. 190*a*), and also by tied notes, the second of which is marked with a dot, implying a detached note (Ex. 190*b*). In such cases the notes are not really tied, but in a measure slurred, the second note being played much more lightly than the first, and the two being connected as closely as possible :—

Ex. 190. CHOPIN, Op. 24, No. 3.

(*a*) *p* *Ped.* *pp* *

Op. 34, No 1.

(*b*)

Approximate rendering.

ten. *ten.*

f > *p* > *p* *f* > *p* > *p*

Beethoven's use of the Bebung is even more characteristic and striking, and, when its peculiar technique has been acquired, is productive of great beauty of effect. His manner of indicating it is by means of two notes tied together, and marked with a change of fingering (Ex. 191). In performance, the note is played with firm pressure by the first of the two fingers marked, while the other is held directly above and close to it; the finger which holds the key is then drawn rapidly away in an inward direction, allowing the other to fall upon the key in its place, with lighter touch, but sufficiently quickly and closely to cause a soft repetition of the sound *without permitting the falling damper to reach the string*, thus avoiding the separation of the two notes by even the smallest interval of silence:—

Ex. 191.

Scherzo. BEETHOVEN, Op. 69.

p *sf*

Rendering (approximate).

mf *p* *f* *mf* *p*

Adagio. BEETHOVEN, Op. 110.

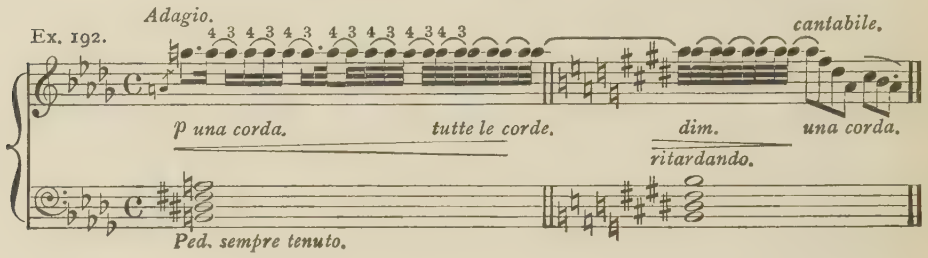
p *cres.* *dim.*

Rendering (approximate).

p *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp* *pp*

The Sonata in A flat, Op. 110, quoted in the preceding example, contains a yet more extended instance of the employment of the Bebung, the difficulty of

which has been greatly increased by the fact that the passage was unfortunately written in an unintelligible form as regards its rhythm, and that the original error has been reproduced in almost every edition. It may therefore be well to give here Von Bülow's emendation of the text, which perfectly expresses the composer's intention :—



VIII.

METHODS OF STUDY.

Imperfect and unsatisfactory performances arise from one of two causes, inability to render the composer's intentions, so far as they are ascertainable, or the desire to ignore them and produce what is called an "original reading." With the second of these causes we have nothing to do—such matters must be left to the artistic conscience of the performer—but, taking for granted the desire to render the conception of the composer as faithfully and loyally as possible, much depends on the task being undertaken with a clear understanding of the various difficulties to be encountered, and on being able to attack them in the manner most likely to ensure a successful result. The inherent difficulties of the work to be studied are far less a cause of hindrance than the student's ignorance of the best means of conquering them, and from this point of view the examination of such methods as experience has proved to be reliable can scarcely fail to be of service.

Difficulties of Technique.

Since all rapid passages are founded upon either scales or chords, the pianist's general powers of execution will depend on his having made a sufficiently protracted and careful study of all the scales and broken chords as technical exercises—that is to say, for their own sake, and apart from their occurrence in any composition which he may desire to play. Scales, in particular, he should be in a position to render at once and faultlessly wherever they may be required, and should never need to practise them in the course of the work studied, especially as they are almost invariably introduced in simple and unaltered form, and the ordinary scale-fingering, with such occasional modifications as have already been referred to (page 16), will always be available. In chord-passages, however, which are formed by taking the notes of a chord singly and separately instead of together, a certain amount of special study will be necessary in order to recognise the various chords, which being separated or *broken*, as it is termed, constitute the passage. The best method of learning such passages is to discover first of all the chords on which the passage is founded, and then to play them *unbroken*, even if they do not always appear as correct harmonies, that the hand may become accustomed to the various changes of position. Thus the passage given at A in Ex. 193 would, in the first place, be practised as at B, and only when the succession of the chords had become perfectly familiar would their separation into the notes of the original

passage take place. This treatment gives a sense of security in the playing of such passages which it would be scarcely possible to derive from always practising them as single notes :—

Ex. 193. MENDELSSOHN, Op. 14.

A.

B.

In modern music, broken chords are frequently met with which are too wide in extent to be covered by a hand of ordinary size, but which must yet be made to sound *legato*. The technique required for such passages is somewhat difficult to describe in words, but it may nevertheless be well to make the attempt. The principle involved is one to which allusion has already been made (see pages 22, 23)—namely, that the movements and condition of the fingers must be the same for difficult passages as for easy ones of similar form. In accordance with this principle, the difficult connection of the third and fourth notes in each group of Ex. 194 would be effected by raising the forefinger just as definitely at the moment of striking the octave above, and by bringing down the little finger just as vertically upon the higher note, as if the two fingers were only separated by their normal interval of a fourth, the greater distance required being covered by a rapid and perfectly horizontal movement of the whole hand to the right, without in the least stretching the fingers apart inconveniently :—

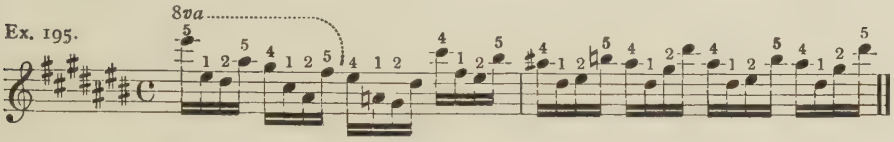
Ex. 194. THALBERG, Op. 26, No. 3.

8va

A very practical use may sometimes be made of this principle in the practising of difficult extensions, by constructing a similar passage, in which the same order of black and white keys is adhered to, but the extensions are avoided. The practice of this parallel passage will accustom the fingers to fall promptly and vertically on their respective keys, while the hand will become familiar with the various changes of position, and it will be found much easier afterwards to give proper attention to the lateral movements of the hand, by which the

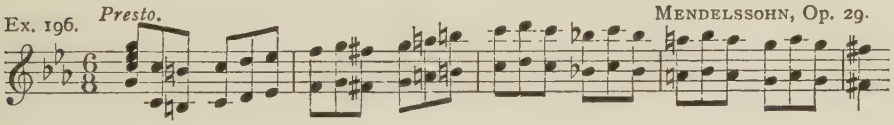
extensions have to be executed when the passage is practised in its original form. A possible paraphrase of Ex. 194 would be as follows:—

Ex. 195.

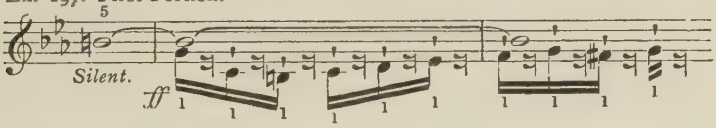


In practising *staccato* octave passages, attention is necessary to two things—namely, the action of the wrist and the steadiness and accuracy of the movements of the thumb. Velocity and lightness in octave-playing depend upon the rapid and elastic rise and fall of the hand from the wrist, but in order to obtain security and to avoid false notes it is necessary that the player should possess perfect control over the action of the thumb. The acquirement of this control in any given passage may be greatly facilitated by practising it with the thumb alone, the hand being meanwhile supported by the tip of the little finger, which is pressed down silently upon any key within convenient reach. The passage must be practised *staccato* and with great force, and the thumb should rise to a distance of not less than three, or better four, inches from the key after each blow struck. As the hand cannot well cover more than an octave, long passages must be divided for practice into portions, each portion being within the compass of a seventh. Thus, Ex. 196 would be practised in two portions, as shown in Ex. 197, and the continuity of the whole passage would be assured by including part of the second bar in the first portion, and taking the same notes again as the commencement of the second portion:—

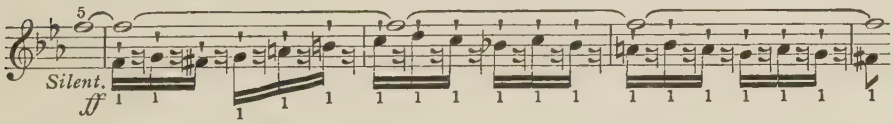
Ex. 196.



Ex. 197. First Portion.



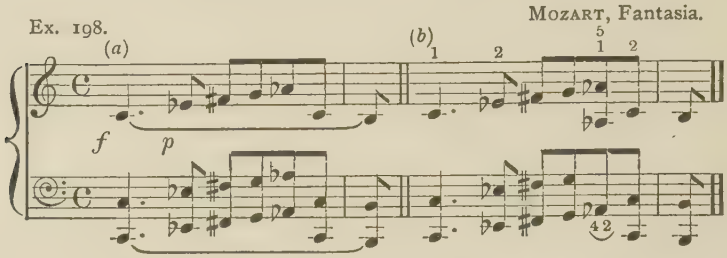
Second Portion.



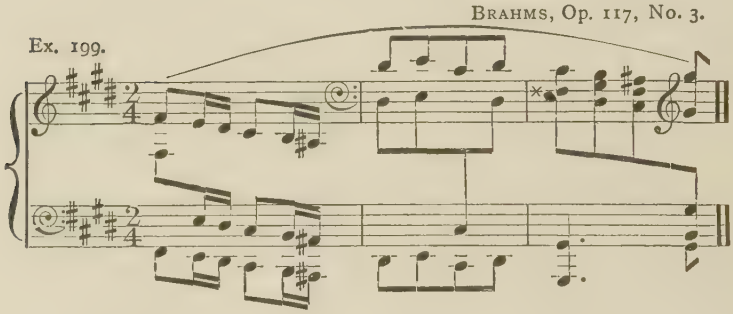
The connection of *legato* octaves can often be assisted by occasionally omitting a note belonging to the thumb of one hand and supplying the missing

note with the other. The difficult connection of the fifth and sixth notes in Ex. 198*a*, for instance, may be rendered perfectly easy if the phrase be arranged as at *b*. In some cases, where the perfect connection of octaves is necessary, the composer has himself dictated this method by the manner of his notation, as in Ex. 199 :—

Ex. 198. MOZART, Fantasia.

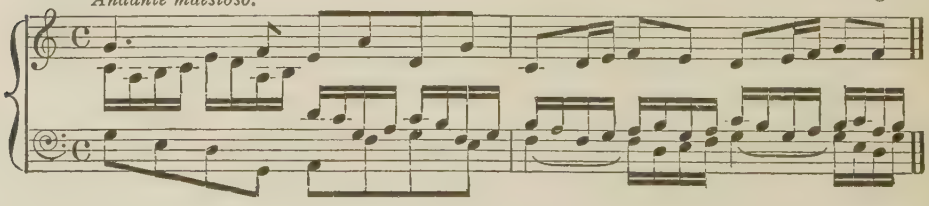


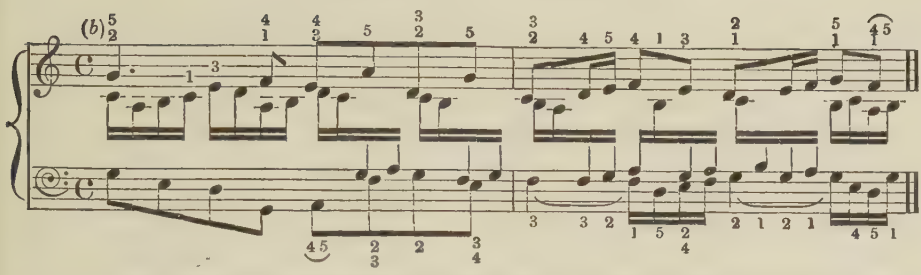
Ex. 199. BRAHMS, Op. 117, No. 3.



But it is in part-playing that such an interchange of hands is of the greatest value. In fugues and other polyphonic compositions, it frequently happens that an inner part lies in such a position that it is impossible to play it with either hand without breaking the connection of the notes. In such cases the part must be divided between the two hands, each hand alternately taking a few notes, according to convenience, that the *legato* may be preserved unbroken. Ex. 200*a*, accordingly, if written as it must necessarily be played, will appear as in Ex. 200*b* :—

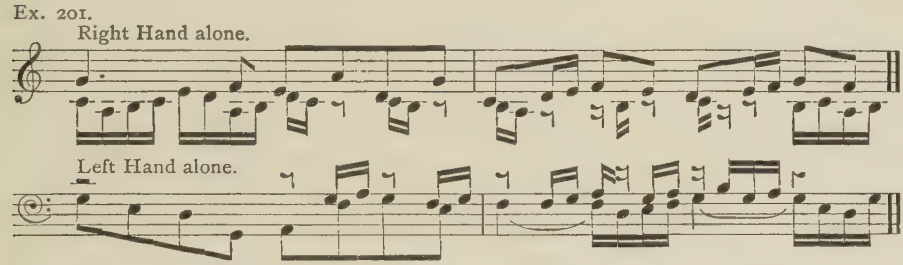
Ex. 200. (*a*) *Andante maestoso.* MOZART, Fuga.





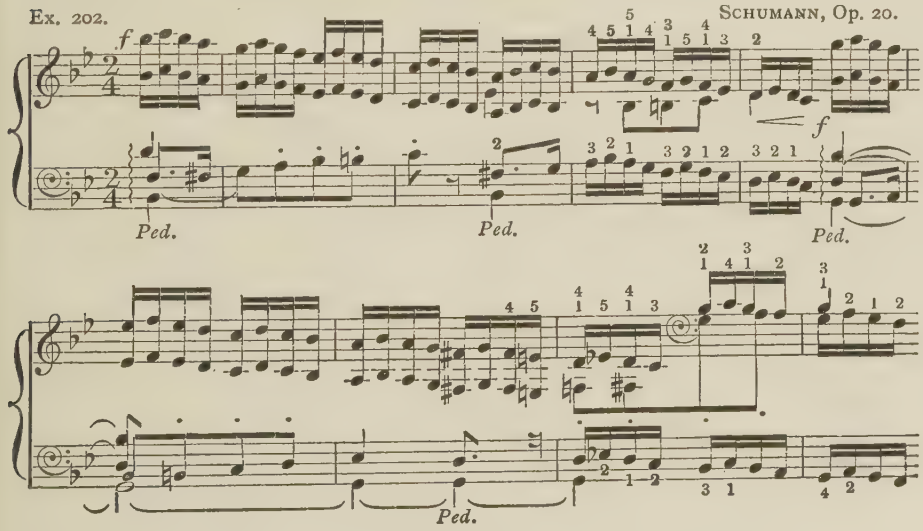
In the study of combinations of this kind, each hand should practise its own share separately, with the utmost precision, every note and rest receiving its exact value. By these means all confusion will be avoided, and if the preliminary practice has been accurate and sufficiently prolonged it should be possible to play the inner part perfectly *legato* from the first moment of putting the two hands together. Ex. 201 shows the method of arranging Ex. 200 for separate hands:—

Ex. 201.



In some few cases, passages which are practically unplayable as written may be made quite feasible by a little re-arrangement. Perhaps one of the best instances of this occurs in Schumann's "Humoreske," where the octave passage in the "Intermezzo," of extreme difficulty as it stands, may be rendered comparatively easy by being arranged as in the following example:—

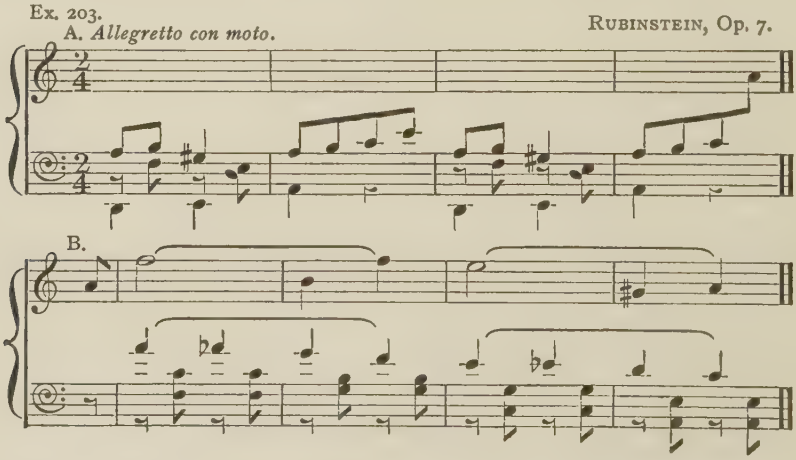
Ex. 202.

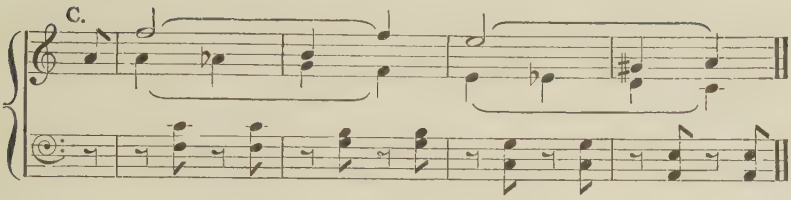


But in making any such redistribution of parts, some caution and judgment is necessary, especially when dealing with the works of those who were essentially pianists, as well as composers, such as Liszt, Rubinstein, Thalberg, &c. The knowledge of the keyboard and its capabilities possessed by these and other pianist-composers was so complete that there is always danger in expressing anything in their music in a different manner from that in which they have set it down, lest some particular effect of balance of tone, which they may have intended to obtain by means of the position of the hands indicated, might be entirely lost. At any rate, in order that no mistake may be made through inadvertence, it is well to ascertain exactly what they did intend, and if then any re-arrangement is made it will be with full responsibility, and not thoughtlessly. As a guide in this respect, it may be observed that the notation of an inner part often passes from one stave to the other, for the obvious purpose of avoiding the use of many leger-lines, and so facilitating the reading. But in many instances leger-lines are used in excess of what would be absolutely necessary—that is to say, a part which might readily have passed to the other stave remains, nevertheless, on its own, with leger-lines sufficient to give it the increased compass required. Since the mere writing down of notes with many leger-lines must entail a certain additional expenditure of time and trouble, to say nothing of the increased difficulty for the reader, it may be assumed that in such cases the composer would not have employed them unless he had a definite purpose in so doing, and this purpose can only be the indication of the particular hand with which he desires that the notes should be played. The point is well illustrated by two extracts from a Caprice by Rubinstein (Ex. 203); in the first, lettered A in the Example, the upper parts are written on the lower stave in order to spare leger-lines, and are, of course, played by the right hand; in the second (at B) the high notes on the lower stave have excess of leger-lines, which could have been avoided if the notes had been transferred to the upper stave, and which consequently show that they belong to the left hand, and are not to be re-arranged as at C, or in any similar manner:—

Ex. 203.

A. *Allegretto con moto.* RUBINSTEIN, Op. 7.

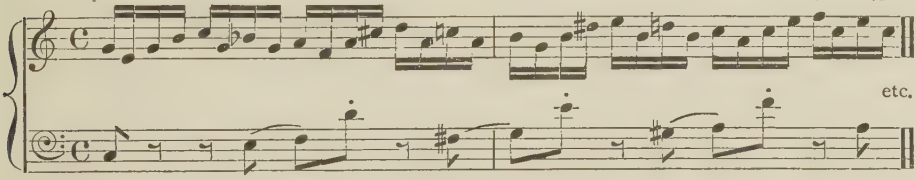




Staccato passages of single notes, except in the comparatively rare cases in which *finger-staccato* is used (see page 8), are played from the wrist, the fingers having as little movement as possible—in fact, only just sufficient to clear the keys and to prevent striking two notes at once. In studying such passages, it is a good plan to place the thumb against the middle finger, about half-an-inch back from the tip, and holding it thus with a moderately firm pressure, to practise the passage with the middle finger alone. This encourages the action of the wrist, and limits (indeed for the time being entirely prevents) the movement of the fingers, and passages so practised may afterwards be played with the ordinary fingering, with a certain elasticity which would be far more difficult to acquire without the assistance of this method.

Passages in which the hands are crossed are often puzzling and difficult to control, but the difficulty may be considerably lessened by inverting the passage, and learning it in the first place with the hands in their normal position. Thus, bars 21 to 24 of No. 43 of Cramer's Studies would be practised as in Ex. 204. So soon as the passage has been well learnt, and the fingers have become accustomed to fall on the proper keys, the hands may be transposed and the passage played in its original form without difficulty, while the time required for learning it will have been materially reduced :—

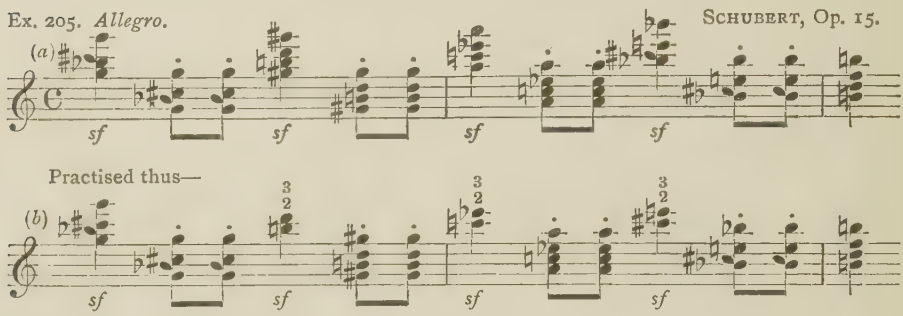
Ex. 204. CRAMER, No. 43.



Security in playing passages containing skips of a tenth, or larger interval, is often very difficult to acquire, and indeed, unless the passages are attacked in the right way, is practically impossible. It is entirely a question of judging distance, and everything depends on the hand, while practising, being kept stretched to its full extent. For supposing the skips to be from thumb to little finger, the most usual form for such passages for the right hand, and the hand to be only slightly extended, it will not be possible to keep the distance between thumb and little finger precisely the same each time that the skip is made, and the result will be that the distance from the little finger to the key to be struck will vary accordingly, and the passage will be rendered as difficult

and unsafe as though the upper note were continually changing its place. But if the hand be always fully stretched, the distance from thumb to little finger, and therefore from little finger to upper note, will remain unaltered, and the passage may readily be practised until absolute certainty is achieved.

In springing to distant chords, it will be found that the extreme notes are always easier to reach in safety than those which lie between, and on this account it is a good plan to practise the leaps to the inner notes only, omitting the highest and lowest, as at *b* in the following example:—



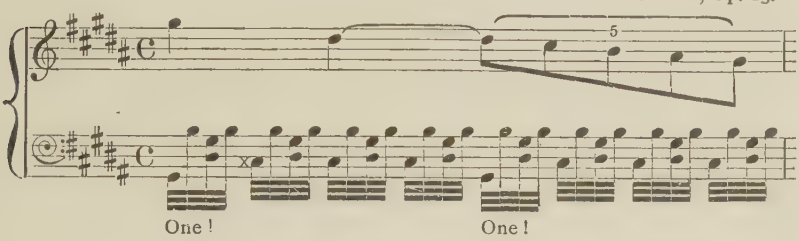
DIFFICULTIES OF RHYTHM, PHRASING AND EXPRESSION.

The combination of two dissimilar rhythms generally presents a certain difficulty, and sometimes a very considerable one, to the student. The treatment has already been in part described, at page 28, but in addition to what has been said on the subject, it may here be observed that there are combinations which are too complex to be calculated arithmetically, and at the same time too slow in *tempo* for the alternative method already mentioned, that of practising with each hand separately, to be of service without further assistance. In such cases the following mode of procedure will be found useful.

Let it be assumed that the proper *tempo* for No. 11 of Schumann's "Etudes Symphoniques" (Ex. 206) is M. ♩ = 60—that is, that each crotchet is to have the duration of one second of time. The student must begin by playing the left-hand part alone for several bars, counting steadily and aloud *one* for each half-bar, without naming the intermediate beats, as shown underneath the example. The counting will thus be at the rate of M. 𝅗𝅥 = 30, or one count every two seconds. Next, he must count *without playing*, still using the number *one* only, and preserving the same *tempo* of M. 𝅗𝅥 = 30. The next step will be to fill up the time between these numbers by adding the numbers *two*, *three*, *four*, *five*, with perfect regularity, and always keeping number *one* in its place. By these means he will have ascertained the exact rate of speed for the right-hand group in the second half of the bar, which group may then be practised in agreement with the counting last described, and, after sufficient repetition, this rate of speed will have become so fixed in the memory

that it will be found possible to play the two parts together, without interfering with the even flow of the bass :—

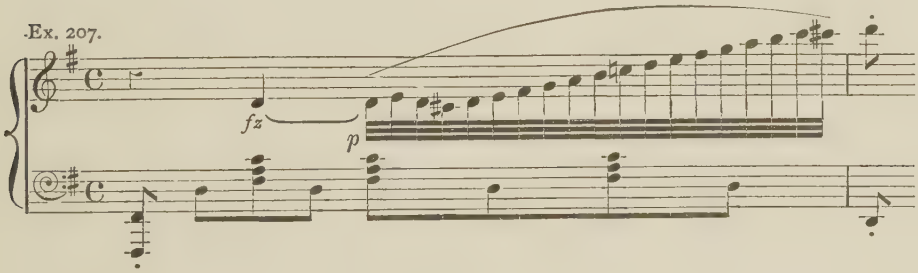
Ex. 206. SCHUMANN, Op. 13.



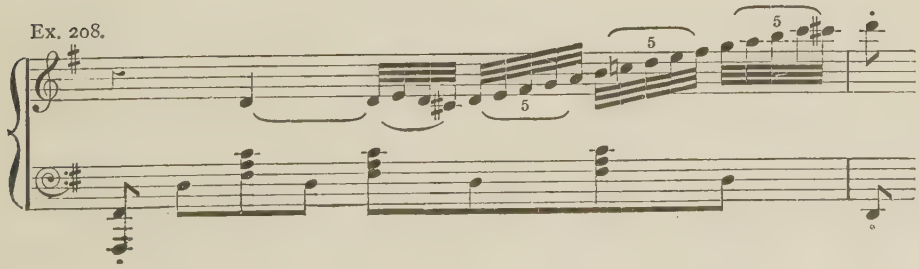
Passages containing a large and irregular number of notes against a few notes of accompaniment should, in the first place, be apportioned among the accompanying notes as equally as may be, in order that the fingering may be learnt and the technique rendered secure, after which it will be a matter of little difficulty to equalise the flow of the passage by slightly quickening those portions which, on account of the mechanical division, were too slow, and retarding those which were too quick. Thus Ex. 207, which contains a scale of nineteen notes accompanied by four quavers, would at first be practised as in Ex. 208, the scale being divided into four groups, one of four, and three of five notes, and it should be observed that in making the division it is generally best to place the group which contains the smallest number of notes at the beginning of the passage :—

HUMMEL, Op. 89.

Ex. 207.



Ex. 208.



Modern editors frequently make this kind of division visible, for the benefit of the learner, but the method is not to be commended, as it gives to the passage an appearance which is at variance with the intended effect, as will be seen on comparing *a* with *b* in the next following example, and often leads to an irregular and disjointed manner of performance :—

CHOPIN, Op. 34, No. 1. The same, Klindworth Edition.

Ex. 209. (*a*) *Vivace.* (*b*)

Students whose sense of proportion is not very keen will often experience some difficulty in keeping strict time in rapid passages which consist of notes of various lengths, as in Ex. 210*a*. In such cases it will be found an excellent plan to select from the passage those notes which are separated by equal intervals of time, adding perhaps afterwards, especially if there should be more than one change in the note-values, those notes which fall on the *halves* of these divisions, and to play these selected notes in correct *tempo* and with strongly marked tone. The object of this is to accustom the ear to the sequence of those notes which are at equal distances from each other, after which the intermediate notes may be readily filled in, without disturbing the position of those to which the ear is already accustomed. Accordingly, Ex. 210 might at first be practised as at *b*, and afterwards as at *c*, before attempting it in its complete form :—

BACH, Chromatic Fantasia.

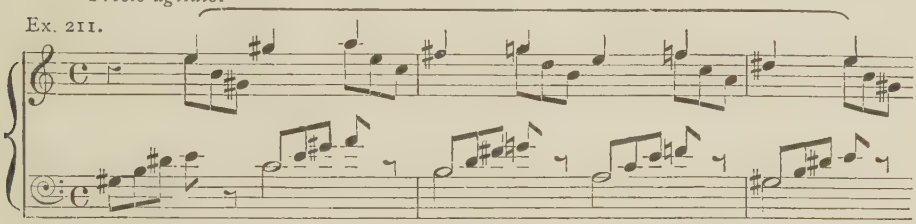
Ex. 210. (*a*) *tr* (*b*) (*c*)

When a melody is accompanied by a *legato* figure in the same hand, as in Ex. 211, it is important that the prominence and proper connection of the

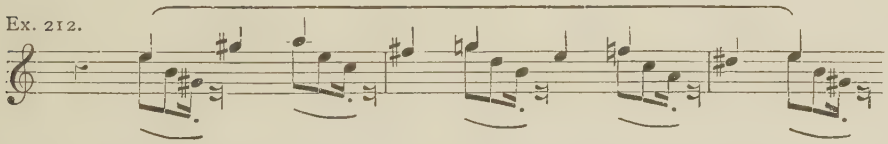
notes forming the melody should be maintained. To effect this with certainty, it is advisable in practising to shorten the final note of each group of the accompaniment, thus leaving each melody-note unaccompanied for an instant before passing to the next. This throws the weight of the hand on to the melody, thereby improving the tone, and at the same time ensuring, or at least facilitating, the connection, and after sufficient practice the contrast between melody and accompaniment will have become so far a matter of habit that the curtailment of the accompanying notes may be safely discontinued. This method of working, shown in Ex. 212, should always be adopted, as without it there is great danger of the effect produced being more or less as indicated in Ex. 213:—

Presto agitato. MENDELSSOHN, Op. 33, No. 1.

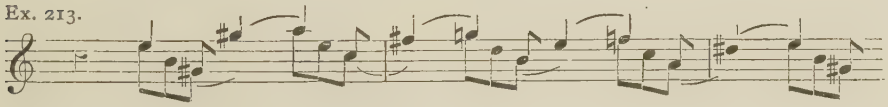
Ex. 211.



Ex. 212.

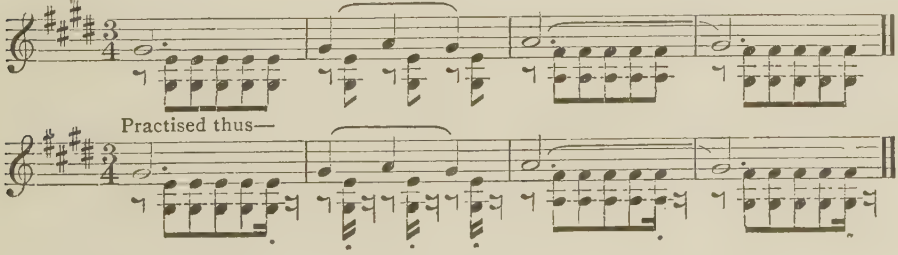


Ex. 213.



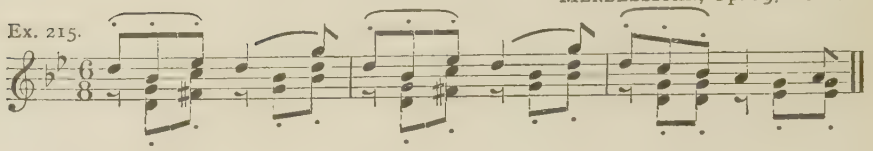
If the accompaniment be in unbroken chords, the same treatment should be applied, each chord, or, if there are two or more chords to a single melody-note, then the last of such chords, being shortened, and the melody-note sustained for a moment after it has ceased (Ex. 214). Even if the melody itself be *staccato* the accompanying chords must be shorter still, that the melody may be sufficiently prominent and important (Ex. 215):—

Ex. 214. SCHUBERT, Op. 90, No. 4.

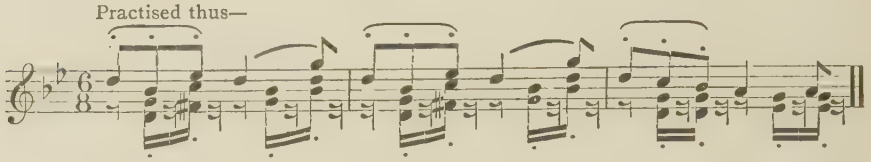


MENDELSSOHN, Op. 19. No. 6.

Ex. 215.



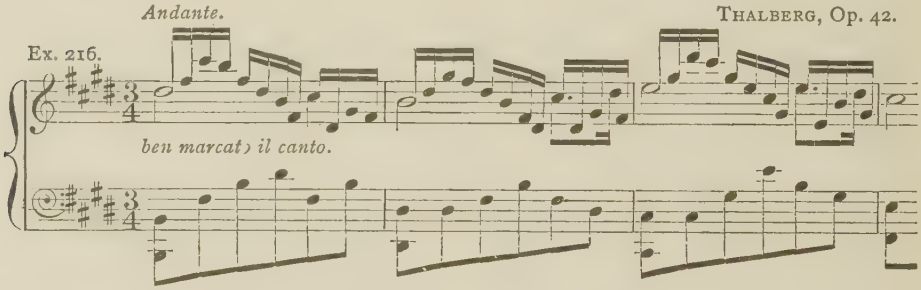
Practised thus—



In modern pianoforte music the clear and consistent rendering of a melody is by no means always so simple a matter as in the above examples. In frequent cases there is a danger of the melody becoming obscured or distorted, either from its being surrounded by a more or less elaborate accompaniment, as in Ex. 216, or by being placed in a position which requires that it shall be executed by the two hands, used alternately, as in Ex. 217:—

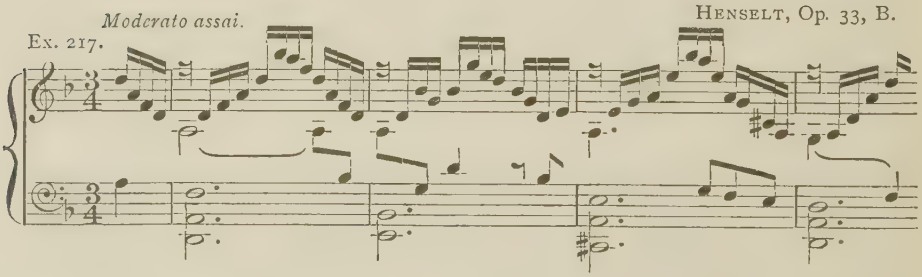
Andante. THALBERG, Op. 42.

Ex. 216.



Moderato assai. HENSELT, Op. 33, B.

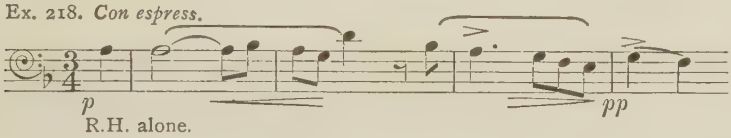
Ex. 217.



To obtain a satisfactory rendering of melodies so arranged, it is by no means sufficient that the player should possess such a general knowledge of the theme as may be acquired by merely reading the composition in its complete form;

apart from this, he must have *heard* the melody, and his ear must have become accustomed to it, in order that he may be able to listen for and recognise it when playing the complete work. Accordingly, the melody must be freed from its accompaniment, and from all considerations of technical difficulty, and must be played repeatedly, with the right hand alone, at the correct *tempo*, and with the most suitable expression possible. The melody of Ex. 217 would therefore be practised in the first place as in Ex. 218. If this is done, the student will have played the melody as well, in every respect, as he is capable of playing it, and when he proceeds afterwards to divide it between the hands, and to add the accompaniment, it will be his task to copy this manner of performance in every particular, both as regards phrasing and variety of tone, since any departure from it which might be occasioned by the complexity of the arrangement would, obviously, be a change for the worse:—

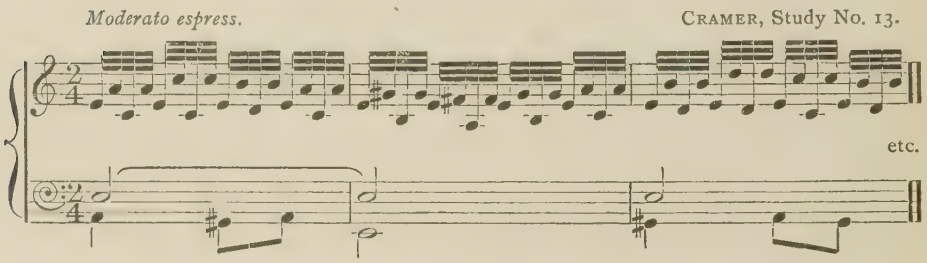
Ex. 218. *Con espress.*

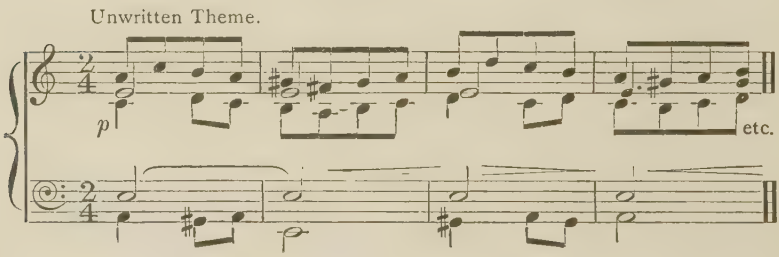


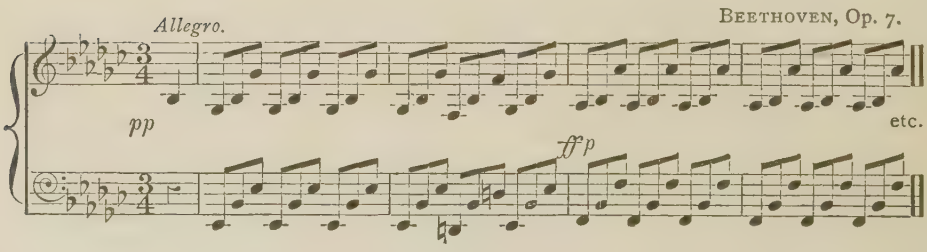
A somewhat similar method will be found of great service in the study of most modern pianoforte music, especially when the arrangement is full and complicated. In general, it may be said that all elaborate music is in reality a variation of a simple theme, and the power of phrasing an intricate composition in such a way as to be clear and convincing to the listener depends on the player's perception and recognition of the plainer form which underlies it. In studying a theme with variations, the student first of all makes acquaintance with the theme, and afterwards, on proceeding to study the variations, endeavours to make them agree with the theme in phrasing and general balance of effect, so as to ensure a proper relationship between them. And it is clear that if he were to begin by studying some elaborate variation, without having looked at the theme in the first place, there would be less likelihood of his producing a satisfactory result, or, at any rate, greater difficulty in so doing. But the player who undertakes the study of a complex and intricate composition is in exactly the position of one who attempts to learn the variation without having had access to the theme, and to obviate this disadvantage it is necessary that he should extract the hidden theme, which, though unwritten, nevertheless lies at the foundation of the complete work, and by playing it, either as an unaccompanied melody or it may be with simple harmonies, should acquire a full knowledge of its capabilities and requirements with respect to variety of tone and general expression. He will thus provide himself with a definite scheme of phrasing, to be afterwards incorporated in his performance of the complete composition.

In illustration of this method of working, which, in the opinion of the writer, no student can afford to disregard, it may be well to give a few

examples, of greater or less complexity, together with the unwritten themes by means of which their performance should be regulated. On account of limits of space it will only be possible to give isolated phrases, but they will probably be sufficient to indicate the mode of procedure. The unwritten theme, when discovered, should always be arranged in as simple a form as possible, all extraneous ornamentation being omitted, and in case the student should not possess sufficient facility on the keyboard to accompany it readily with its proper harmonies, as in the examples, it will suffice if the plain unaccompanied melody be extracted and employed, as this is all that is really necessary to form a basis for the study of the phrasing, though less satisfying to the ear than the fuller arrangement. In one instance given, that of No. 8 of Schumann's "Etudes Symphoniques," it appears desirable to show the whole of the underlying form, which the student should compare with the complete variation as written by the composer :—







Unwritten Theme.

pp sf sf

cres. dim. pp etc

CHOPIN, Op. 10, No. 7.

Vivace.

p etc.

Unwritten Theme.

p etc.

CHOPIN, Op. 25, No. 12.

Allegro molto con fuoco.

f etc.

Ped. Ped.

Unwritten Theme.

f *f* etc.

Allegro vivace. GRIEG, Op. 40.

f etc.

Unwritten Theme.

f *cres.* etc.

Presto con fuoco. CHOPIN, Op. 23.

etc.

Ped. *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.*

Unwritten Theme

f *sf* *f* etc.

Presto a capriccio.

L.H.

SCHUMANN, Op. 4, No. 2.

etc.

Unwritten Theme.

p

etc.

Presto.

HABERBIER, Op. 53, No. 20.

etc.

Unwritten Theme.

p

etc.

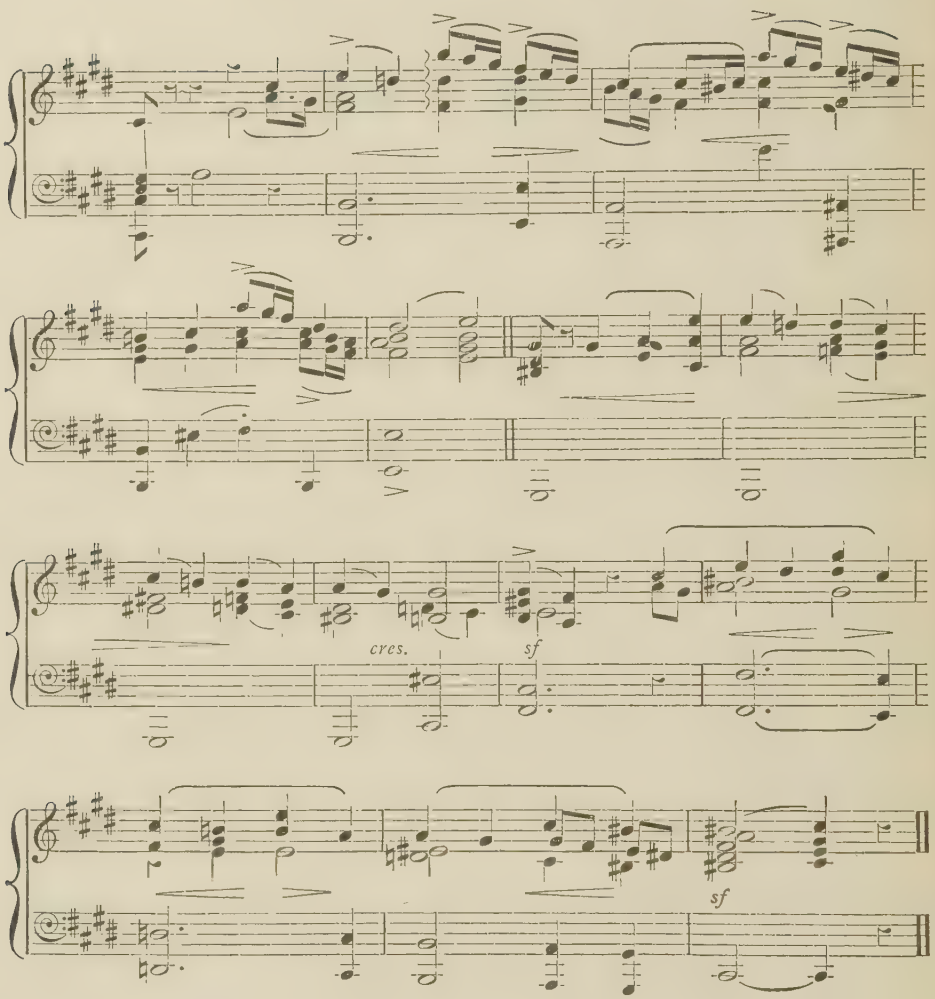
SCHUMANN, Op. 13, Etude 8.

Unwritten Theme.

Moderato.

sf *f* *cres.* *sf*

col Ped.



Most of the particular difficulties appertaining to the study of pianoforte music having now been alluded to, and suggestions, some of which the writer trusts may prove helpful, having been given as to possible means of surmounting them, it only remains to speak briefly of more general matters—that is to say, of matters affecting performance as a whole. Not that it is possible to lay down definite rules which shall govern expression and phrasing, or to say that any particular phrase or theme can only be rendered properly in one way. In dealing with such considerations the player's own nature and individuality must assert themselves, and the result will be admirable or otherwise in proportion to the soundness of his judgment and the depth of his musical feeling. Nevertheless, to the more or less inexperienced student a few words of direction, and also of warning, may be not unwelcome.

Variety of tone is the chief factor in musical expression, and must be cultivated accordingly, but the amount as well as the kind of variety may vary widely under different conditions. In deciding on the particular expression required for the effective rendering of any given phrase, let not the judgment be too hastily formed; not, indeed, until many experiments have been tried and results compared. The task of discovering the most suitable expression of a phrase is like looking for an article which is hidden in a room; one does not stand motionless in the middle of the room, wondering where it can be concealed, one rather searches diligently, even in unlikely places, until the hidden object is found. In like manner, the proper expression may be best arrived at, not by silently considering what had better be done, but by trying and comparing a large variety of expressions, even though at times obviously inappropriate, until at length some particular treatment strikes the ear as the only true and acceptable one, and is adopted accordingly.

In the not unfrequent case of a doubt arising as to which of two opposed kinds of expression is the more suitable—as, for instance, whether a phrase should be played with increasing or diminishing force—it is well to play it in both ways alternately, *but with greatly exaggerated effect.* If this is done, one of the two forms of expression will strike the ear as eminently unsuitable, and the other treatment will accordingly be chosen, and will then merely require regulating as regards the *amount* of variety employed.

Passages which have to be played *ritardando* or *accelerando* should at first be practised in strict time, by which means their rhythmical form will become impressed on the understanding, and the subsequent modification of the *tempo* will be intelligible and reasonable, instead of appearing as a meaningless dragging or hurrying.

To be satisfactory, the amount of variety given to any particular phrase must be in correct relation to the general character of the whole composition. It would be quite possible to take an isolated phrase from any work, and to give to it an expression which might appear perfectly agreeable and suitable, but which would yet prove absolutely inappropriate, when considered in relation to the context. The same observations apply to the variation of force in single notes; a note to be played *sforzando* in a powerful and emphatic passage must necessarily be very different from a similarly marked note occurring in a phrase, the general character of which is subdued and gentle.

In conclusion, a word of warning may be spoken against the idea, too prevalent among students, that the study of works of great technical difficulty will render the conquest of minor difficulties more easy. This is by no means necessarily, or even generally, the case. The power of vanquishing the greatest difficulties depends entirely on each progressive step from the commencement being made perfectly secure, and unless this has been done, retrogression and final failure must be the result. In all things, let "thorough" be the watchword, and let it be remembered that "he does much who does a little well."

INDEX.

Accelerando 69, 121
Accent 31
———, anticipation of 32
———, displacement of 40
——— of brilliant passages 36
——— of slurred notes 39
Acciaccatura 85, 87, 97
Accompaniment above melody 62
———————, divided 69
———————, melodic 66
———————, method of practising 113
After-notes 86, 97
Appoggiatura 85, 87, 97
Arpeggio 91
————, Chopin's use of 99
————, fingering of 15
Bars, division of music into 31
——, long, divided into short 34
——, short, combined to form long 33
Beats, sub-division of... 27
Bebung 100
Cadences 49
Canon 64
Chord-passages 5, 103
Contractions 14, 21
Crescendo 58
Diminuendo 58
Due Corde 81
Expression 58
————, discovery of suitable 121
Extensions 14
————, technique of 104
Fingering 14
————, in contrary motion... 18
————, methods of marking 26

FINGERING, modern methods of 22
——— of double scales 18, 19
——— of ornaments 25
——— of repeated notes 24
——— of scales 15, 16, 17
FINGERS, changing the 20
———, sliding 19
GRACE-NOTES 86
——— in bass 90
HANDS, alternate use of 16, 23
———, crossing 23
———, method of practising 109
———, interchange of 106
HARMONICS 77
IMITATION, balance of tone in 64
LEGATISSIMO 45, 46, 47, 48, 67
———, compared with part-playing 67
LEGATO 12
——— between distant tones 41
——— combined with staccato 44
———, difficult, method of practising 104
———, varieties of 38
———, variety of tone in 12, 60
MELODY, descending, and Melody, double 63
———, in imitation 64
———, prominent 61
———, subordinate 65
———, technique of 10
METHODS of study 103
MORDENT 25, 85
NACHSCHLAG 87
OCTAVES, legato 21
———, method of practising 105
———, staccato 8
ORNAMENTS 84
——— in Chopin's music 96
PART-PLAYING 61, 67, 106
PARTS, re-arrangement of 106, 107, 108
PASSAGES, analysis of 6, 115
———, harmonies suggested by 36
———, melodious, phrasing of 56

PEDAL 73
———, change of, during sustained notes 76
——— crescendo 78
———, damper 73
——— legato 75
———, indication of 74, 79
———, notation of 75
———, third, in modern instruments 82
———, una corda 80
PEDALS formerly in use 81
PHRASES, division of music into 49
———, intelligible rendering of 55
PHRASING 38
——— of passages... 56
———, variety of tone in 55
PRALLTRILLER 25, 85, 97
RALLENTANDO 69
———, rhythmical 70
RHYTHM 27
———, variety of 112
RHYTHMS, combined 28, 110
———, methods of practising 29, 110
RITARDANDO 121
SCALES 7
———, chromatic 17
———, double 18
———, fingering of 15, 16
SCHLEIFER 86, 97
SCHNELLER 85
SKIPS 109
SLIDE 86
SLUR 38
——, accent of 39
SLURRING of three or more notes 42
SORDINI 79
STACCATO chords 9
——— combined with legato... 44
———, finger 8
——— melody 45
———, methods of indicating 42
———, method of practising 109

Staccato octaves 8
———, varieties of 43
———, wrist 8
Syncopation 32
Technique 4
——— of chords 9
——— of extensions 104
——— of melody 10
——— of octaves 8, 21
——— of passages 7
———, varieties of 5
Tempo, variation of 69, 71
Tempo rubato 72
Thumb on black keys 22
———, passing the 7, 15, 16, 17
———, practice of, in octave-playing 105
Time, playing in 27
Tone, balance of 61, 62, 63, 64
——, gradation of 12
——, variety of 58, 121
Touch for brilliant passages 7
——— for chords 9, 10
——— for melody 10
———, legato 12
———, staccato 8
Trill 85, 93
——, Bach's sign for 95
—— beginning with subsidiary note 93
——, Chopin's notation of 96
Turn 25, 85
Una corda 80
Unison, passages in 68
Unwritten themes 115
Vibration, sympathetic 77
Vorschlag 87, 97
Wrist touch 8, 9

INDEX OF EXAMPLES.

Numbers in italics refer to works mentioned in the text but not quoted.

BACH. Art of Fugue 94
—— Chromatic Fantasia 16, 112
—— Fantasia, A minor 67
—— Fugue, No. 4, Book 1, C sharp minor 21
——, No. 23, Book 1, B major 67
——, No. 13, Book 2, F sharp major 94
——, No. 15, Book 2, G major 95
—— Invention, B minor 95
—— Suite Anglaise, No. 1, A major 95
——, No. 4, F major 94, 95
——, No. 6, D minor 68
—— Toccata, G minor 30
——, F sharp minor 47
—— Variations, G major 88
BEETHOVEN. Concerto, Op. 37, C minor 51
——, Op. 58, G major 16, 23, *81*
——, Op. 73, E flat major 29
—— Rondo, Op. 51, No. 1, C major 43, 88
—— Sonata, Op. 2, No. 2, A major *41*, 89
——, Op. 2, No. 3, C major 21, 52, 54
——, Op. 7, E flat major 22, 39, 116
——, Op. 10, No. 1, C minor 10, 59
——, Op. 10, No. 3, D major 72
——, Op. 13, C minor 50
——, Op. 14, No. 1, E major 72
——, Op. 22, B flat major 44, 55, 59
——, Op. 26, A flat major 38, *47*, 55
——, Op. 27, No. 1, E flat major ... 40, 45, 70
——, Op. 28, D major *34*, 42, 60
——, Op. 31, No. 1, G major 44
——, Op. 31, No. 2, D minor 40, 51, *55*, 69, 78
——, Op. 31, No. 3, E flat major ... 9, 24, 41, 72
——, Op. 53, C major 37, 75
——, Op. 57, F minor *47*
——, Op. 69 (Pianoforte and Cello), A major ... 101

BEETHOVEN. Sonatina, Op. 79, G major 25, *34*, 54
——— Sonata, Op. 81A, E flat major 17, 53
———, Op. 90, E minor 55
———, Op. 101, A major 41, 50
———, Op. 106, B flat major 40, 53
———, Op. 110, A flat major 81, 101, 102
———, Op. 111, C minor 43
——— Variations, Op. 35, E flat major 65
———, Op. 76, D major 25
BRAHMS. Ballade, Op. 118, No. 3, G minor 52
——— Capriccio, Op. 76, No. 1, F sharp minor 17
——— Intermezzo, Op. 117, No. 3, C sharp minor 106
——— Rhapsodie, Op. 119, No. 4, E flat major 52
——— Variations, Op. 24, B flat major 76
CHOPIN. Andante spianato, Op. 22, G major 98
——— Ballade, Op. 23, G minor 118
———, Op. 47, A flat major 91, 99
———, Op. 52, F minor 73
——— Fantasie Impromptu, Op. 66, C sharp minor 30
——— Impromptu, Op. 29, A flat major 17
——— Mazurka, Op. 6, No. 1, F sharp minor 97
———, Op. 24, No. 3, A flat major 100
———, Op. 24, No. 4, B flat minor 48
———, Op. 30, No. 4, C sharp minor 96
———, Op. 33, No. 4, B minor 97
——— Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 2, E flat major 11
———, Op. 9, No. 3, B major 71
———, Op. 15, No. 2, F sharp major 29, 72
———, Op. 27, No. 2, D flat major 11
———, Op. 32, No. 2, A flat major 98
———, Op. 37, No. 1, G minor 91
———, Op. 48, No. 2, F sharp minor 28, 96
———, Op. 55, No. 1, F minor 24
———, Op. 62, No. 2, E major 60
——— Polonaise, Op. 22, E flat major 15, 99
———, Op. 53, A flat major 57
——— Prelude, Op. 28, No. 8, F sharp minor 98
———, Op. 28, No. 13, F sharp major 66
——— Scherzi *34*
——— Scherzo, Op. 20, B minor 71
——— Sonata, Op. 35, B flat minor 100
———, Op. 58, B minor 30, 48
——— Study, Op. 10, No. 4, C sharp minor *56*

CHOPIN. Study, Op. 10, No. 5, G flat major *22*
———, Op. 10, No. 7, C major 117
———, Op. 10, No. 8, F major *56*
———, Op. 25, No. 7, C sharp minor 66
———, Op. 25, No. 11, A minor... 7
———, Op. 25, No. 12, C minor *56*, 117
——— Valse, Op. 34, No. 1, A flat major 64, 100, 112
CRAMER. Study, No. 5, C major 47
———, No. 13, A minor 116
———, No. 24, D minor 46
———, No. 43, C major 109
GRIEG. Suite, Op. 40, G major 118
HABERBIER. Study, Op. 53, No. 20, G flat major 119
HAYDN. Sonata, E flat major 39
HENSELT. Romance, Op. 33B, D minor 114
HUMMEL. Concerto, Op. 89, B minor 111
——— Pianoforte School 46, *93*
——— Polonaise, F major *82*
LISZT. Paganini-Caprice, No. 2, E flat major 16
——— Waldesrauschen 79
MENDELSSOHN. Andante and Rondo Capriccioso, Op. 14 ... ... *74*, 104
——— Caprice, Op. 16, No. 2, E minor 43
———, Op. 33, No. 1, A minor... 113
——— Concerto, Op. 25, G minor 68
———, Op. 40, D minor 56
——— Fantasia, Op. 28, F sharp minor 66, *74*
——— Lied ohne Worte, Op. 19, No. 2, A minor ... 49
———, Op. 19, No. 6, G minor ... 114
———, Op. 62, No. 6, A major .. 93
——— Prelude, Op. 35, No. 3, B minor *8*
———, Op. 35, No. 4, A flat major 65
——— Rondo, Op. 29, E flat major 63, 105
——— Serenade, Op. 43 69
——— "Variations Sérieuses," Op. 54 20
MOZART. Fantasia, C minor 106
——— (Second), C minor 35
——— Fuga, C major 106
MÜLLER. Caprice, Op. 29, No. 1, E minor 37
RUBINSTEIN. Caprice, Op. 7, A minor 108
SCHUBERT. Fantasia, Op. 15, C major *10*, 110
———, Op. 78, G major 89
——— Impromptu, Op. 90, No. 1, C minor 53
———, Op. 90, No. 4, A flat 6, 51, 113

SCHUBERT. Impromptu, Op. 142, No. 3, B flat major 50, 87
——— Klavierstück, No. 3, C major 53
——— Momens Musicals, Op. 94, No. 2, A flat major ... 53, 88
———, Op. 94, No. 3, F minor 87, 89
———, Op. 94, No. 4, C sharp minor ... 79
——— Sonata, Op. 42, A minor 24, 68
SCHUMANN. "Bunte Blätter," Op. 99, No. 2, E minor 31
——— "Carnaval," Op. 9, No. 5 (Eusebius) 29, 92
——— Concert Allegro, Op. 134 20
——— Concerto, Op. 54... 33
——— Concertstück, Op. 92 31
——— "Davidsbündler," Op. 6, No. 4, B minor 64
———, Op. 6, No. 5, D major 88
———, Op. 6, No. 7, G minor 92
———, Op. 6, No, 10, D minor *50*
——— Etudes Symphoniques, Op. 13 ... ... 111, 119
——— Fantasiestücke, Op. 12 ... ... 32, 37, 51, 87, 91, 92
——— Faschingsschwank, Op. 26, No. 4 (Intermezzo) ... 82
——— "Grillen," Op. 12, No. 4 32
——— Humoresken, Op. 20 ... ... 42, 83, 107
——— "In der Nacht," Op. 12, No. 5 ... ... 37, 92
——— Intermezzo, Op. 4, No. 2, E minor 119
——— "Kreisleriana," Op. 16, No. 2, B flat major 70
——— Op. 16, No. 3, G minor 90
——— Op. 16, No. 5, G minor 90
——— Novelletten, Op. 21, No. 4, D major 32, 63
———, Op. 21, No. 8 33
——— Romance, Op. 28, No. 2, F sharp major ... 12, *50*, 63
——— Scherzo, Op. 32, No. 1, B flat major 40
——— Sonata, Op. 14, F minor 90
———, Op, 22, G minor 42, 45
——— "Traumeswirren," Op. 12, No. 7 51
——— "Vogel als Prophet," Op. 82, No. 7 20
——— "Warum?" Op. 12, No. 3 ... ... 87, 91
——— "Wiegenliedchen," Op. 124, No. 6... 21
THALBERG. Fantasia, Op. 42, "Don Giovanni" (Minuet) ... 114
———, Op. 33, "Moïse" 63
——— "L'Art du Chant," No. 11 21
——— Study, Op. 26, No. 3, C sharp major 104
WEBER. Concertstück, Op. 79 ... ... 8, 12
——— Sonata, Op. 24, C major 9, 36
———, Op. 70, E minor 55
——— Variations, Op. 28, Theme by Méhul 94

OVELLO AND Co Ltd

KP-899-949